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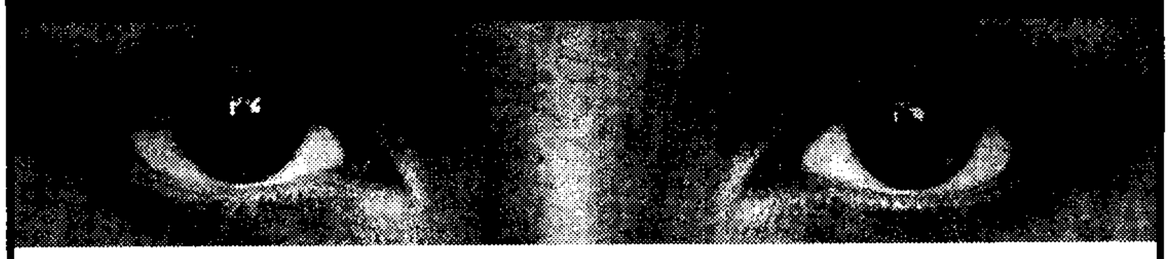

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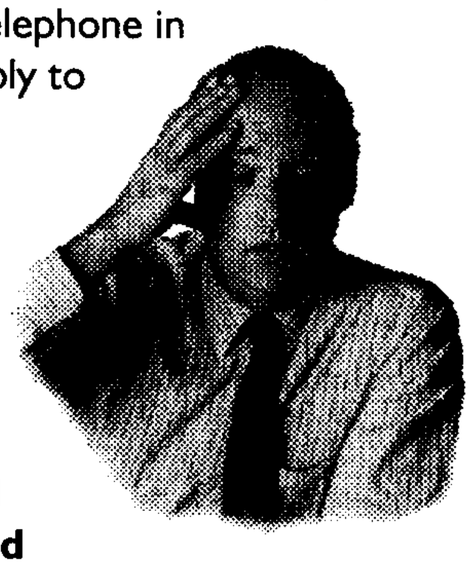

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IN all the welter of comment about the Monica Lewinsky affair it is important to remember what is the real issue here. It is *not* what Mr Clinton may or may not have done with Miss Lewinsky in the privacy of his trousers *(surely office? E.S.)*.

No, this is an issue of trust. The President of the United States has a sacred duty to the American people who elected him and if he betrays that trust then he is not worthy to remain as the world's most powerful politician.

It is his statesmanship, not his sexual peccadilloes, that should concern us at this point in time.

It is his moral character, not the salacious and titillating details of his private life, that remains the issue at stake and this paper recognises it as such.

IN TODAY'S DAILY GNOME

Exclusive pics of Oval Office love romps 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

The A-Z of phone sex — pull-out special . . . 9, 10, 11, 12

White House sex map — who did what where 12, 13, 14

Is Clinton taking Viagra? asks Dr Raj Pervert 15

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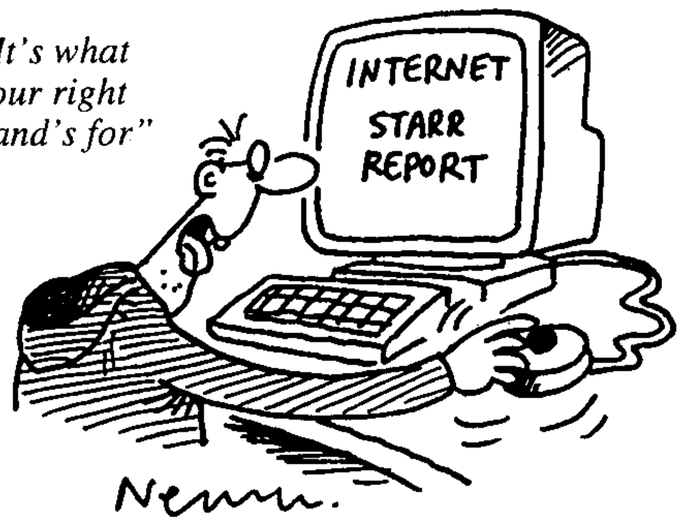

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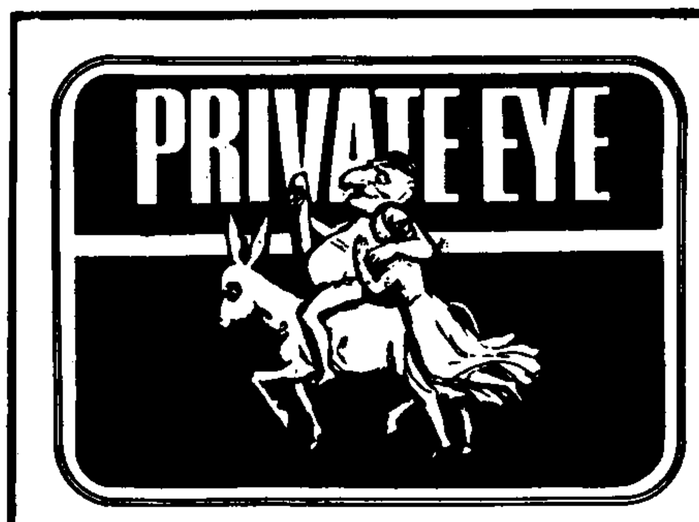

COLOUR SECTION

HEAVY and harsh will be the government strictures on Andersen Consulting for its part in the collapse of the main computer register of national insurance records (NIRS).

The collapse, which immediately affected some 80,000 recipients of incapacity benefit and job seekers' allowance, follows a series of delays in the NIRS project for which Andersen has already had to pay up. The government's fury will in no way be affected by any of the following:

1 The free surveys on tax and benefits carried out by Andersen Consulting for the Commission on Social Justice, which drew up a programme for the Labour party before the general election.

2 The "training in public affairs" for 100 top Labour MPs at Templeton College, Oxford, in the summer of 1996 — organised for the Labour party at very low charges by Andersen Consulting.

3 The hiring in 1994 of Patricia Hewitt, former press officer to Neil Kinnock, as head of research at Andersen Consulting at a salary of £150,000 a year. Hewitt has just been promoted to be economic secretary to the treasury, which pays for all those incapacity benefits and allowances.

4 The "settling of old scores" between Arthur Andersen, Andersen Consulting's sister organisation, after the Tory government had banned it from all government work following its dubious role in the multi-million pound DeLorean scandal in Northern Ireland. The breach was healed last year on terms highly advantageous to Andersen's, which is now free to bid for government contracts just like anybody else.

5 The grotesque conflict of interest involving Andersen Consulting in the Wessex regional health authority scandal, exposed by the Commons public accounts committee. The scandal was expertly and angrily exposed in the speeches by the new Labour MP for Southampton Itchen, John Denham, now minister of state at the department of social security, which is responsible for incapacity benefits, etc.

"THERE is nothing left to say ... [The President] isn't making any pretence of innocence now ... this country has suffered so long."

Strong words — reported in the *Arkansas Democrat* on 6 August from a young Democrat politician in Bill Clinton's home town of Little Rock. Two days later he was attacking the President again: "There is no question that an admission of making false statements to government officials and interfering with the FBI is an impeachable offence ... I think it is plain that the President should resign and spare the country the agony of impeachment and removal proceedings."

How very wise.

The President, of course, was Richard Nixon; the year 1974; and the young man with the high moral tone one William Jefferson Clinton.

FIRSTGROUP, the voracious and highly profitable bus and rail company, has shown how dear to its heart are the safety of passengers and the welfare of employees.

It first suspended and then issued a final written warning to Bradford bus driver Mohammed Taj — for speaking out after the death of a teenage passenger. When a 14-year-old boy suffered a fatal asthma attack on his bus, Mohammed Taj was unable to radio for help because the bus radio was out of order. He was forced to drive to a phone box to call an ambulance. The boy died despite the best efforts of the driver and passengers to revive him.

Nobody has anything but praise for the way Mr Taj handled the emergency, but he was disciplined for speaking to the local media about the incident. He publicly called for an inquiry into the circumstances of the death, including the question of faulty radios. A company spokesman said the driver was threatened with the sack because employees "must not speak to the press without getting their comments cleared by a senior manager".

FACT: Mohammed Taj is a branch secretary of the TGWU.

ANOTHER FACT: FirstGroup announced profits last year of £95.5m.

GOOD news for shareholders of electronics giant GEC: chairman Lord Prior told the agm on 4 September that the company's exports of military equipment have not been affected by "new" Labour's "ethical" foreign policy.

"I don't think very much has changed from the previous government's policy," Lord Prior told the relieved gathering — and he, after all, should know.

GEC's current customers include the governments of Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, all renowned for their own highly ethical policies. (Another former valued client, Mr S. Hussein of Baghdad, is currently unable to do business with GEC on account of the UN arms embargo.)

All these ethical considerations must be something of a dilemma, one might think, for Labour peer and GEC managing director Lord Simpson, one of the first life peers created by Tony Blair after last year's general election. Apparently not. At the time of his ennoblement Lord Simpson — formerly of Rover, BAe and Lucas — told Blair he was willing to make a "contribution" in the Lords, but that his "overwhelming priority" was the interests of GEC.

This was "completely and utterly accepted by Number 10", he said. Including, presumably, GEC's determination to put arms sales before ethics at every opportunity.

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Street of Shame

THE STARR report has been gleefully seized on by the *Telegraph* newspapers as vindication of their former Washington correspondent Ambrose Evans-Pritchard.

Last weekend's *Sunday Telegraph* had a long piece by R. Emmett Tyrrell, editor of the *American Spectator*, praising Evans-Pritchard as "the most diligent of the journalists pursuing the Clinton scandals". There is one small problem with this. The scandals with which Evans-Pritchard regaled *Torygraph* readers for so many years — such as his suspicion that the "suicide" of White House lawyer Vince Foster was in fact murder, or his allegation of coke-smuggling from an airstrip in Arkansas — are not even mentioned by Starr. After thorough investigation, he found no serious evidence to support them.

The *Sunday Torygraph* itself admitted as much back in December 1996, when it published a Review Front by James Langton deriding the Foster story and other Clinton conspiracy theories as "the mutters of nutters, the deluded ramblings of a lonely fellowship of Net-nerds, feeding on each other's paranoia".

Even a year back in England hasn't made Evans-Pritchard any less erratic. Last Thursday, in a two-page spread for the *Daily Telegraph*, he declared that "events will now move with vertiginous speed. This is not Watergate, where the proceedings went on for months... The Starr report, I suspect, will be more than enough. Once the members of the judiciary committee have examined the text, in all its shocking and prurient detail, they will acknowledge that the president is a borderline sociopath who must be removed at once."

By Monday, however, the diligent hack had changed his mind. "Kenneth Starr has failed to catch his prey this time... Reading through the narrative and footnotes of this grotesque report, I am forced to conclude that Mr Starr has lost his wits."

He isn't the only one.

Sun editor David Yelland said: "I never met Lord Rothermere – I am too young and he too important – but I made a point of studying his life.

"He was a most exceptional man – he was not self made, he made himself.

Sun

RESIDENTS of southern Spain are still reeling from the mass invasion by British hacks following the arrest of Kenneth Noye, wanted for questioning about the M25 murder.

Steve White of the *Daily Mirror* has been suspended on full pay while his bosses and the Spanish police investigate a "misdemeanour" allegedly committed when he and a party of sangria-sodden hacks decided to pay a visit to Noye's deserted villa. But this is small beer beside the antics of Ian "Loverat" Edmondson from the *News of the Screws*.

Two years ago the *Eye* revealed how Edmondson had stitched up his then girlfriend, *Mirror* hackette Sasha Jensen, for the sake of a seedy story about a *Coronation Street* starlet's "cocaine romps". This time the devious Loverat has turned over a young Spanish hackette while also outwitting Graham Johnson of the *Sunday Mirror*, fondly known as the "Beast of Bodmin" after the hoax that got him sacked from the *Screws* a few months ago.

When Edmondson arrived in the tiny fishing village of Zahara de los Atunes to cover the Noye story, he found that Johnson had already bought up the services of Carmen Torres, 23, who works for the local *Diario de Cadiz*. The attractive brunette, promised fabulous riches if she would work for Johnson exclusively, took a week's unpaid leave from her paper and was soon "on the job" with the Beast of Bodmin in his fifth-floor room at the Hotel Sol Atlanterra.

Edmondson realised that he couldn't compete with Johnson's good looks (*sic*) or Mirror Group cash (double *sic*). Instead he took the innocent hackette to one side and explained a Fleet Street technique described as "the reverse ferret double bubble", which meant that she could also have lots of lovely Murdoch shillings if she secretly kept him informed of any leads Johnson was pursuing. This, he assured her, was a "perfectly acceptable" ruse in English journalism. So twice a day Carmen would dutifully slink away from her lover and whisper all she knew down the phone to "Loverat".

True to another journalistic tradition, as soon as they had filed their stories Edmondson and Johnson did a runner. Carmen is now back at her own paper, sadder and poorer, but much wiser in the wonderful ways of Fleet Street.

LUVVIES

"IF you want to be specific about acting, it has to do with prostitution. I'm getting money in return for bringing personal things that maybe shouldn't be displayed to the market place. In most cases it's trivial, but in the best scenarios you are performing an interesting service. We have such a fragmented world with so many cultures. In ancient Greece they had only Homer who spoke the Odyssey, and that was their journey, which they understood."

DAVID DUCHOVNY
Radio Times

REFRESHED after his summer holiday, *Evening Standard* editor Max "Hitler" Hastings returned to the office in a mood to sack someone.

The someone in question turned out to be Adam Edwards, editor of the paper's weekly magazine *ES*, who was abruptly given his marching orders last Monday. Two days later another *ES* journalist, Natasha Gilmore, was ordered never to show her face in the building again, after 14 years' service with Associated Newspapers. The only reason for her dismissal was that she happens to be married to Adam Edwards, and Hitler thus found her continuing presence an embarrassment.

He may come to regret his brutality. For in a fortnight's time Adam and Natasha Edwards are due to spend the weekend with one of their dearest friends, a certain Jonathan Harmsworth — now better known, since the recent death of his dad, as the 4th Viscount Rothermere.

FRIENDS fear for the marbles of Piers Stefan Pugh-Morgan, editor of the *Mirror*.

Next month, on his third anniversary in the job, Piers at last gets his mitts on a lucrative wad of share options. Colleagues have always suspected that as soon as he collected the loot he would start looking for new opportunities elsewhere — possibly in the empire of his old mentor Rupert Murdoch.

But if that was the plan it has been killed stone-dead by Moron's coverage of the Manchester United story.

All last week the *Mirror* denounced the Dirty Digger as a "devil", complete with horns and pointy ears, who corrupts everything he touches. "Don't believe a word Rupert Murdoch says," readers were advised. "And don't touch his money with a bargepole. It is tainted." Oh, and don't touch his newspapers either: "The *Sun* has a long record of lying to its readers."

Morgan has apparently forgotten that he spent five years earning tainted money at the *Sun*, and another two editing the *News of the Screws*. But his absent-mindedness may cost him dearly. Furious at Piers' betrayal, *Sun* executives inserted a sentence in their rag recently describing him as an immature joker "with a somewhat limited future in journalism".

NEWS AGENCY hacks are well used to seeing large chunks of their work stolen by newspaper journalists, but Tony O'Reilly's *Irish Independent* has taken this form of larceny to new heights.

Just after midnight on 5 September, Steve Holland of Reuters filed a colour piece about President Clintosterone's trip to Ireland. "He wore a new Irish sweater," it began. "He joked with his aides. He talked about golf..." A few hours later the *Irish Indie* ran the same story verbatim — but credited it to "Susan Garraty, Washington correspondent".

This has proved too much even for the tired cynics at Reuters, who are lodging a formal protest. But what else do they expect from the *Irish Independent*? For a long time O'Reilly's rag reproduced cartoons, graphics and entire news stories from UK papers such as the *Telegraph* and *Mail* without permission — until the high court put a stop to it by granting injunctions for copyright theft.

DESPITE its disastrous effect on snow quality, hot air is once again the predominant feature of the *Good Skiing Guide* in promoting its 1998 edition.

The back cover of the book, published by the Consumers' Association, entices new readers with the promise of "expert and completely independent assessments of 500 resorts... untainted by advertising and sponsorship". As *Eye* readers will recall, however, this guide actually piggy-backs much of its content from freelance ski hacks who indulge in luxury freebies.

US ski destinations have been notably generous in recent years, dispensing top-class hotel accommodation and air travel, with every mountain restaurant adding to the gravitational challenge. A stretch-limo tour of Colorado resorts, for example, was one perk enjoyed by several *Good Skiing Guide* editors and contributors. Could this by any chance be related to the eight-page entry on Vail, or the seven-page spread on Breckenridge?

By contrast, Engelberg (in Switzerland) is not mentioned at all, despite ski terrain which regularly attracts the attention of (unsponsored) American ski writers, and vertical descents which far exceed any US rival. No freebies to Engelberg, evidently.

OBN

"She has a long limbed, coltish quality; the legs and arms were folded at acute angles over the hard chair. Her hair, naturally blonde, is dyed auburn and is shaggily disarrayed from a day of different styles. The skin on her face is flawlessly smooth, while that on her arms and legs gleams with a honeyed glow... Eva is on her way to Paris when we say goodbye. On the way home, my spirit feels free. The road rage and traffic seem for once, bearable."

SEBASTIAN FAULKS
(interviewing Eva Herzigova)
Express

MORE TALES FROM THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

WITH only a month to go until publication of Tom Bower's unauthorised biography of Mohamed Fayed, the Phoney Pharaoh is a worried man. As well he might be: according to someone who has seen the manuscript, it includes sexual revelations that "make Bill Clinton look like an amateur".

In a last-ditch attempt to stop the book, Fayed asked to see Macmillan boss Richard Charkin, Bower's publisher. Charkin, aware of the old liar's penchant for hidden cameras and microphones, insisted that the meeting be held in the Macmillan office, rather than at Harrods. But at the last minute Fayed rang to say he had injured his leg badly and was unable to walk. Could Charkin please come to Harrods instead? When Charkin arrived, needless to say the wily Fayed bounded across the room to greet him, with no hint of a limp.

For their second meeting, on Monday last week, Mohamed was forced to come to the mountain. Accompanied by a lawyer and six bodyguards, he ranted and raved about the countless libel writs that would engulf Macmillan if the book wasn't stopped. Charkin still refused to budge — whereupon Fayed suddenly abandoned his threats and turned on the charm instead. "Would you," he asked plaintively, "like to publish my autobiography as well? Next spring, perhaps?"

The answer, once again, was a polite no.

LOTTERY NEWS

SALES of the national lottery's new "Easy Play" scratchcards have got off to a poor start, despite a lavish advertising campaign and three successive £2m jackpots. The punters are just not interested: sales have averaged 1.5m a week, less than a sixth of the 9.5m anticipated.

An air of desperation pervades the latest advert: "1. Go to National Lottery machine. 2. Ask for ticket or use payslip. 3. Pay £1. This is why we call it Easy Play." But the game, based on football results, is not that simple to understand. In the first week, matching five score draws would have won you a fiver; in the second week, over £5,000; in the third week, nowt at all. Easy, eh?

In its first three weeks the game paid out £2m more in prize money than was actually spent on it. Have no fear, however: Vernons — the game's main sponsors, in partnership with Camelot — will not be out of pocket. The lower the sales, the greater Vernons' cut — at the expense of the "good causes", of course. Even if sales limp along at 1m a week Vernons are still likely to turn a profit.

Such is the nature of Oflot's hard bargaining on the nation's behalf — as with the "guaranteed jackpots" in the national lottery draws, which are virtually guaranteed to lose money for the good causes (see *Eye* 952). So why does Oflot director John Stoker tolerate this madness? Isn't he supposed to maximise revenue for the good causes?

Apparently not. Besieged by critics, Stoker has now claimed his first duty is to see that prize-winners get 50 percent of lottery money. Since Camelot usually pays out only 45 percent on Wednesday and Saturday draws, the deficit has to be covered by increasing payouts on scratchcards and occasional "Superdraws". Even so, the shortfall is never made up. So in the end prizewinners don't get their 50 percent, and nor do the good causes get as much as they should.

Does anyone gain, then? Yes. Oddly enough, the one thing that *is* maximised by this complicated redistribution is the profit of Camelot plc.

HACKWATCH

WITHOUT VERE OR FAVOUR

"The 3rd Lord Rothermere was, until he died on Tuesday night, the last of the *genuinely* great press barons... It was certainly an act of almighty providence that gave to journalism Vere Harmsworth, the last *genuinely* great press baron." — Paul Dacre, editor of the *Daily Mail*.

The obvious implication is that the 4th Lord Rothermere, young Jonathan, can never be genuinely great — a strange message from an editor to his new proprietor.

"Those close to him know that he loved his wife Pat until she died in August 1992... Indeed, when the marriage went into decline they were officially separated, but, in order to make it easier for her, he loyally kept that a close secret. Loyalty was always a vital element of his life." — Geoffrey Levy, *Daily Mail*.

Levy discreetly omitted to mention one example of this marital loyalty which might explain why the marriage to Pat (aka "Bubbles") went into decline: Rothermere had for 15 years been maintaining a mistress in Paris, the Korean hand-model Maiko Lee, known to Bubbles as "that geisha".

"No one but himself and his first wife Patricia... had been aware of the confidence he felt in his own abilities when the moment came for him to take over from his father as chairman of Associated Newspapers in January 1971." — Geoffrey Levy, *Daily Mail*.

In fact, he had no such "confidence": he went into a blue funk, and it was only a harangue from his wife that forced him to snap out of it. As Bubbles told *Tatler*: "We were in Jamaica swimming, and there was heavy pressure from the opposition to sell to the *Express*. 'Look,' I said to Vere, 'you can swim any day of your life, but decisions are being made that are going to affect you and my son. Why are you not at those meetings in London?' He said, 'I haven't been invited.' I said, 'Well, even if you are not invited you should be there because it's my son's money and heritage.' I told him, 'I'm booking a plane back tomorrow and either you're coming or you're not.' The moment we arrived we were driven straight to Warwick House: just my father-in-law [the 2nd Viscount], his wife, my husband and myself met. My father-in-law said, 'I'm being screwed. I either have to trust somebody completely or sell.' I told him, 'Never sell.' And he said, 'I will go along with it, if you promise to stay with Vere.' And I said I would. So the next morning he cancelled all negotiations... and made my husband chairman. Vere was so shocked, he retreated to my bed for a fortnight!"

"As we walked with his dog across the seemingly endless expanse of sands at Le Touquet in Northern France, among several British holidaymaking families, he [Rothermere] watched the children playing joyfully in the sunshine, and turned to me and said: 'Don't ever forget that they are the future. The paper must always reflect the hope they represent, and what their parents want for them'." — Jonathan Holborow, editor of the *Mail on Sunday*.

Clearly Holborow heeded the advice: on the weekend after Rothermere's death the *MoS* carried a big story about TV presenter Kirsty Young splitting up with her boyfriend; a report on Richard Branson's wife-swapping, an interview with Michelle Collins from *EastEnders* — and the revelation by Nigel Dempster that "romance has finally blossomed for *Antiques Roadshow* expert Bunny Campione". What parent could ask for more?

"Vere Rothermere was also intensely kind." — Jonathan Holborow, *Mail on Sunday*.

This point was repeated in many of the tributes. Wisely, none of them mentioned that in 1991 he refused to pay for Bubbles Rothermere's Christmas party at Claridges, the high-point of her year, thus forcing her to cancel it. Bubbles was deeply upset and died a few months later of an overdose of sleeping pills.

"He was a champion of traditional family values." — Alison Boshoff, *Daily Telegraph*.

Apparently the *Telegraph* had forgotten what Rothermere said in an interview only a month earlier: "Family values — what does that phrase mean? I've not the least idea! It doesn't mean anything... If men and women have a lover and they're happy, why is it anybody else's business?" This interview was published in, er, the *Daily Telegraph*.

"He believed in backing his own instincts, hiring the best talent on the market and giving unstinting support to his journalists." — Paul Dacre, *Daily Mail*.

Here is a sample of Rothermere's unstinting support for one of his journalists, from his interview in the *Telegraph* last month: "I don't agree with him [Paul Dacre] and I've told him so. We've gone too far downmarket, there is too much tabloid-y reporting. That kind of thing leads in due course to slovenliness and sensationalism, something reporters use to cover up the fact that they've done no work. I want it to stop. What I say to Paul is: 'The market is moving towards us. If we go down to meet it, we'll endanger our market position.' It's fine to be catching up the *Mirror*, but not at that price. At the moment, Paul is playing a dangerous game of footsie."

"Lord R — as we all called him — was the journalist's journalist. He delighted in our company and we in his." — Nigel Dempster, *Daily Mail*.

Dumpster neglected to add that Rothermere once described his column as being about as appetising as "a dish of old, cold potatoes".

"Lord Rothermere, last of the great press barons, has died of a heart attack at 73." — *Daily Mail*, 3 September, p.1.

"VIAGRA WATCH... The drug has been linked to the deaths of several elderly US users who have suffered heart attacks." — *Daily Mail*, 3 September, p.22.

Could these two stories by any chance be related? Only a few days before his death, Rothermere had privately complained about the number of stories in the *Mail* which suggested that Viagra could be fatal for men in their seventies. He was taking the wonder-drug himself, he revealed, and felt as frisky as a teenager...

JUST FANCY THAT

Lord Rothermere, centre, with editor David English, left, at the *Daily Mail* in 1971.

The Scotsman

DONORS KEBABBED

"NEW" Labour must have been delighted that the initial response to its list of donors focused on the luvvie factor — generous friends like Eddie Izzard and Lisa Stansfield. But, the *Eye* can reveal, the list contains some real corporate horrors.

Take **Enron**, the American gas company bidding for Wessex Water (see last *Eye*). Enron may have an appalling human rights history at its plants in India and Puerto Rico, but Labour has disclosed that the company will be sponsoring a table at its gala dinner during the Blackpool conference.

Former Tory energy minister Lord Wakeham sits on the board of Enron, and another Tory, Colin Moynihan, the absurd former sports minister, sits on the board of the Enron Renewable Energy Company (see HP Sauce). Moynihan also graces the board of **Ranger Oil**, a Canada-based company which drills in the North Sea and has also sponsored the Labour party. The oil company must be delighted with the recipients of their donation: Gordon Brown recently announced he was dropping all the plans he made in last September's budget to reform North Sea taxation.

The presence of **British American Financial Services** among the sponsors shows that Labour's fondness for pensions pirates continues. BAFS' most famous public face is Allied Dunbar, one of the firms "named and shamed" over pensions mis-selling. Allied Dunbar encouraged thousands of people to switch from their safe public sector pensions to Allied Dunbar products. The company is slowly clearing up these embarrassing cases now. This has nothing to do with the fact that if its part in the mis-selling scandal is forgotten it could get business from the government-sponsored "stakeholder" pensions.

BAFS' funding also shows that even after the Bernie Ecclestone furore Labour can't get enough tobacco cash. BAFS has only just come into existence as a separate company after splitting from its parent, British American Tobacco. Cynical Americans saw the split as a way of BAT salting away some of its reserves far from the hands of those suing the tobacco firm for knowingly causing cancer.

Another company paying for a table at Labour's gala conference dinner is **Novartis**, purveyors of genetically modified sugar beet and maize, as well as organophosphate dips. Angela Eagle recently reassured parliament that a "rigorous risk assessment" is carried out before any genetically modified crops are released. Now Ms Eagle will be able to continue her rigorous assessment over dinner with Novartis executives.

Labour lobbyist **GJW Government Relations** has booked a table at the conference dinner, as has PR company Freud Communications. Matthew Freud no doubt felt like returning a favour after he was appointed to do the lucrative PR for the millennium dome.

Perhaps the most extraordinary of the Labour-sponsoring PR firms is **Bergmans**. This Newcastle-based company has ensured good relations with the new regime by employing Rory Scanlan, formerly a media and political intelligence officer at Millbank, and prior to that a researcher for Jack Straw. Labour members will be thrilled to hear that Bergmans speciality is PR for the defence industry, clients including Boeing, GKN, GEC, Thomson Missile Electronics, Thomson Marconi Sonar and many others. Apart from its weapons manufacturing friends, Bergmans also gives strategic advice to North Yorkshire Police Authority. The authority was full of praise for Bergmans, describing their relationship as a "baptism of fire". Labour members will be glad to know the fire in question was the police authority's appalling handling of a major sex discrimination case.

"ABSOLUTE bunkum" was how education secretary David Blunkett described reports, started by a leak to the *Sunday Telegraph*, that Chris Woodhead had been reappointed chief inspector of schools with a 40 percent salary increase.

Blunkett told *Today* the day after the leak (14 September) that no decision had yet been made on the appointment or the salary.

Woodhead watchers will recall that the Labour government was bounced into keeping Woodhead by an unexpected question to Tony Blair from David Frost in 1995. Asked about Woodhead, Blair blurted out that he would be kept on. David Blunkett, then shadow education secretary, was not consulted and made it clear he thoroughly disapproved of this form of appointment by media.

As a gesture of his irritation with his media manipulation of government, Blunkett insisted on appointing a joint chairman to balance Woodhead on the new school standards authority — Tim Brighouse of Birmingham, who hates Woodhead almost as much as Woodhead hates him.

Woodhead himself paid tribute to Frost's power in the opening sentences of his annual chief inspector's lecture in February in which he wondered aloud "whether David Frost can work his habitual alchemy on the prime minister so that I might stay in office for ten years". Are his friendly media bouncing the chief inspector into office once again?

Number crunching

£13,000 ■ is the pay of a graduate going into teaching

13% ■ is the drop in graduates going into teaching since the government launched its "education recruitment initiative"

LET no one underestimate how terrifying to Labour's Millbank Mafia is the prospect of the Grassroots Alliance taking over the party's national executive committee (NEC).

Not satisfied with setting up a phone vote system (last used on any major scale by Carlton's infamous monarchy debate and the *Stars In Their Eyes* final), and sending out mailshots to every member identifying the party's "preferred candidates", party workers are now engaged in the enormous (and expensive) task of telephoning every member to make sure they have remembered to dial in their choice — and to remind them which of those standing are officially Friends of Tony.

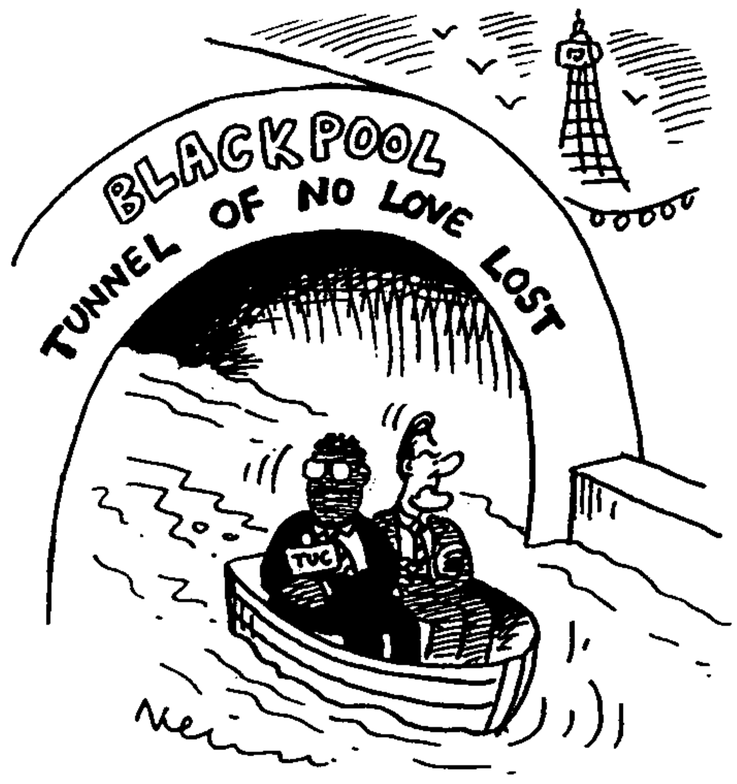
Most recipients of such calls react in the same way as they do to "cold calls" from double glazing or telephone companies: the most common reply being that they intend to record their votes for the wing of Labour who aren't prepared to waste party funds on such blatant bully boy tactics.

PADDY TIPPING, Labour MP for Sherwood, Notts, is showing the kind of initiative that should see him go far.

At an informal Q&A session at the local Co-op party's annual meeting in Nottingham last month, Tipping was a guest and was asked if it was permissible these days for Labour MPs to ask "difficult" questions of the prime minister in the Commons.

Of course, replied Paddy — especially if the questioner was clever enough, like himself, to have helpfully written the answer already!

The bearded wonder was then asked how, when not asking questions himself, he often managed to appear sitting behind questioners in TV coverage of the Commons. Easy — the trick, he revealed, is to check the order paper for interesting questions coming up and then make sure one is parked near the questioner and in view of the cameras.



GOOD NEWS for the *Eye*'s favourite computer company EDS (aka Electronic Disaster Systems). It is a shortlisted bidder for the privatisation of the operations division of National Savings — a multi-million pound operation.

If the firm wins the new contract it should make up for its recent disappointment in Wandsworth where the council has sacked EDS as the contractor running its council tax and benefits service. The south London borough's disenchantment comes as no surprise: it had already fined the Texan computer company last year for falling below targets. (Brent council also fined EDS heavily for underperforming its contract terms).

Almost 100 former council staff will transfer back to their old employer when the contract (worth £3.2m a year) is terminated. Still, the prospect of National Savings will make Wandsworth's few million pounds look like very small beer indeed.

SHADOW Health Secretary Ann Widdecombe hates the "filth" shown on television – but she still enjoys appearing on it, she confesses in a TV interview.

Glasgow Herald

LORDS FOR HIRE

CONTINUING our series, meet their lordships who are paid consultants in the oil, gas and energy sphere.

LIFE PEERS:

Lord Ezra: Director of Energy and Technical Services Group.

Lord Fraser of Carmyllie: Director of Elf Exploration UK plc; director of International Petroleum Exchange; chairman of JKX Oil and Gas plc.

Lord Garel-Jones: Adviser to British Petroleum Company plc.

Lord Howe of Aberavon: Adviser to British Petroleum Company plc.

Lord Moynihan: Director of Ranger Oil Ltd; director of Enron Renewable Energy Corporation.

Lord Wakeham: Director of Enron Corporation USA.

HEREDITARY:

Duke of Abercorn: Director of Calor Gas Northern Ireland.

Lord Cullen of Ashbourne: Parliamentary consultant to British Gas plc.

Lord Glenarthur: Consultant to Chevron UK Ltd.

Lord Gordon of Strathblane: Member of BP Scottish Advisory Board.

Earl of Lauderdale: Parliamentary consultant to Elf UK Ltd.

Viscount Torrington: Consultant to companies involved in the oil, gas exploration and mining industries; consultant to Heritage Oil and Gas Ltd (Bahamas company).

THE *Express* devotes an entire centre spread to an upbeat interview with "new" Labour donor and Creation Records chief Alan McGee, in which he boasted: "Creation Records did £50m last year but we're still ramshackle and always will be. I fly by the seat of my pants and so does Creation Records. I don't like the corporate approach."

What McGee neglects to mention is that the horribly corporate Sony Music Entertainment owns 49 percent of Creation's shares and holds global distribution rights. When McGee announced in July that he would sell his records via an internet site, Sony's lawyers stepped in using phrases like "breach of contract" and "injunction".

Creation quickly backed down. Amazing how corporate dealings can slip the mind of a "seat of my pants" entrepreneur.

ENVIRONMENT NEWS

MORE embarrassment for Prince Charles, who enthusiastically promotes his green credentials.

Wessex Water and the Environment Agency have investigated the release of cypermethrin, a pesticide, into Luckington Brook, a tributary of the River Avon, in a spill they believe caused the death of several thousand endangered crayfish. After careful detective work the agency has served a summons on Ian Farquhar, joint master of the Beaufort Hunt, whose kennels are thought to be the source of the leak.

The Duke of Beaufort's hunt, enthusiastically supported by Charles and Camilla Parker-Bowles, will be in court on 20 October accused of "causing poisonous, noxious or polluting matter to enter controlled waters contrary to the Water Resources Act of 1991". Presumably the organic-farming prince takes a dim view of pesticide polluters and will ride out with a different hunt henceforth should the Beaufort be found guilty.

Meanwhile Charles's colleague on Business in the Community, Sir David Barnes, continues to embarrass his royal patron. His company Zeneca produces the genetically modified foods which so enraged Brian recently. And Barnes's firm has now agreed to pay a fine of $3.5m and spend more than $15m in an environmental clean-up operation in the US.

The US department of justice arranged the deal after Zeneca took the idea of business in the community too literally and spread its business — toxic chemicals — all over the community of Mount Pleasant, Tennessee. It pumped 40 million gallons of contaminated water into deep wells, infecting the town's drinking supply and leaking benzene into the air.

LORD ARCHER RHYMING SLANG

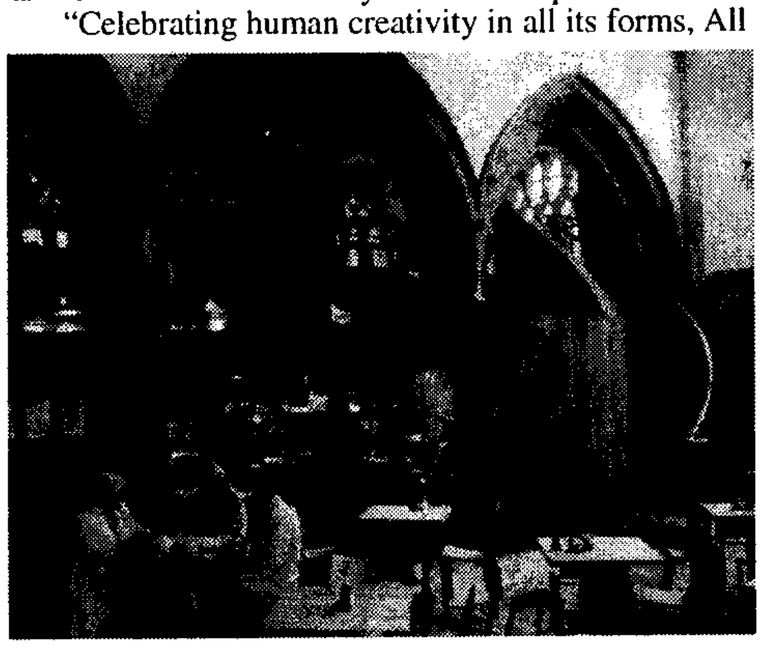
"Apples and pears – dodgy Anglia shares"

NOOKS and CORNERS

MY PICTURE shows the interior of All Saints', Hereford, which was once a medieval church. Several times in this column I have described the struggles of the Roman Catholic congregation in Hereford first to stop their neo-classical church being closed and demolished and then to prevent a gratuitously destructive reordering once the archdiocese of Cardiff had been reluctantly persuaded to do what the laity wanted (*Eye* 941).

The restoration of this beautiful building is now under way, I am happy to report. But little did I know that, just up the road in the heart of the city, the local Anglican church was being transformed all the while so that the good people of Hereford can not only enjoy spiritual food but "delicious fresh food at fair prices" as well in the "Community Arts Worship Café".

"Celebrating human creativity in all its forms, All



Saints seeks to bring the holy into the ordinary and the ordinary into the holy," and in its rebuilding of the church, Rod Robinson Associates has certainly celebrated the ordinary. Although it was perhaps a failure of nerve to decide to leave the dull old chancel with its medieval stalls intact, the rest of the building has been transformed into a multi-purpose space where "just about anything can happen from talks to sales, meetings to lunches".

A sinuous cafeteria counter boldly curves through the south arcade and a staircase rises to the new gallery in the south aisle. Nothing ordinary about this, of course: instead of a boring straight line, the division between the raised café seating area and what remains of the nave is an exciting curve while, to show how creative they are, these enterprising architects have even given the new chairs lopsided backs.

The most thrilling new intervention, however, is to be found under the tower. Instead of a boring space the visitor is now confronted by a high-tec Platonic form — a metal cylinder which is both beautiful and useful. For this space-pod is a toilet — surely the most exciting convenience in the county, and truly functional modern architecture with no attempt at concealment or "blending in". It is the sort of structure which might be standing in the street, so, by bunging it under the tower Rod Robinson Associates is making a telling statement against the artificial distinction between exterior and interior space, inside and out, as well as challenging hidebound notions of what constitutes a place of worship.

The total cost of repairing the medieval fabric of All Saints' and making it suitable for the next millennium was a mere £1.7m — cheap at the price, surely. As it says on the back of the postcards from which my picture is taken: "A stunning combination of old and new."

THAT the modern Church of England has succeeded in establishing a healthy balance between spiritual and material nourishment can also be seen in the case of St John's, Hanley. As I have described before, the diocese of Lichfield was anxious to dispose of this bit of Georgian plant in Stoke-on-Trent. But this provoked local opposition and the formation of the Friends of St John's Church, Hanley, who wish to see the building continue to serve the community and have prepared a scheme for it to be used by local businesses.

Well, the church commissioners have now issued a draft redundancy scheme under the 1983 pastoral measure which envisages the use of the building "as a restaurant and art gallery and for exhibitions and for cultural and community purposes". At least that is what it says in the blurb. In fact the Lichfield board of finance is selling the church so it can be used as an Asian restaurant

'Piloti'

RED FACES AT LLOYD'S

THE appointment of Sir David Rowland as chairman of the National Westminster Bank has been greeted with some hilarity by former "names" at Lloyd's, the London insurance market. They confidently expect to see Sir David in the American courts before too long.

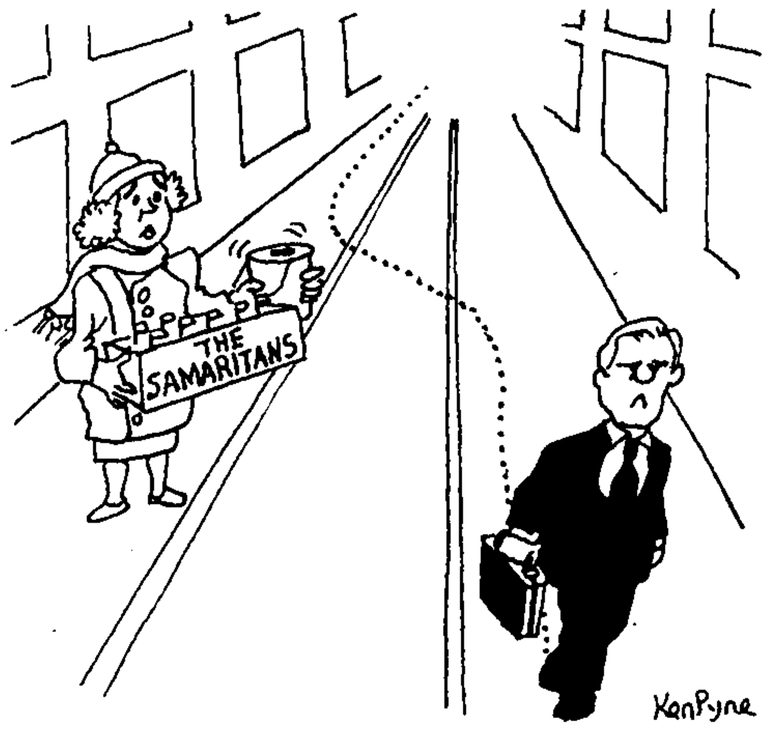
Lloyd's is being sued in California for fraud. Very rich names there are still fuming at their recruitment to Lloyd's without being told of the huge losses anticipated from asbestos and pollution insurance claims. They argue that they were recruited to protect Lloyd's from the brunt of these losses without being told of the vast sums for which they would (and did) become liable.

They emphasise the role in the affair of one David Rowland, who was chairman of underwriters Matthews Wrightson in the early 1980s and chairman of Lloyd's during the period of what they regard as the cover-up — from 1993 to 1997.

Until recently Lloyd's has managed to restrict legal actions against it to the British courts. When American names, led by a furious and seriously rich oil dealer called David West and his wife Susan tried to sue in California, Lloyd's pleaded that the United States was *forum non conveniens* (an inconvenient place to hold the action). On 1 September, to the horror of Lloyd's, Judge Dzintra J. Janavs of the superior court of California rejected this argument. He gave permission for West and Co to sue Lloyd's in California, where the powers of discovery and the sensitivity to fraud may be sharper than in England where so many important people, including judges, are names.

The civil case could be complemented by criminal charges. In August, John Marsh and John Ellis, two senior federal investigators from the US government's postal inspection department, based in White Plains, New York, came to Britain and secretly interviewed several disgruntled names. The federal team was investigating what it calls "stock fraud and mail fraud" by Lloyd's of London. The inspection team originally planned to set up its headquarters in the British postal inspection department, but switched to the American embassy after hearing rumours that the department is heavily infiltrated by MI5 and MI6 agents friendly to Lloyd's.

One familiar sign of crisis has been another office break-in. The Williamsburg offices of Earle Hale, David West's persistent lawyer, have been broken into. Nothing was stolen — except all the documents relating to the case against Lloyd's. All this news is irritating top people in London's top insurance market, but appears to have made little impact at Britain's top bank.



EYE TV

Watchdog (BBC1)
Top Gear (BBC2)

THE new season is upon us, and all those brash little magazine shows that save the BBC from making proper programmes are back for new and longer runs.

The joy of *Watchdog*, *Weekend Watchdog*, *Travel* and *Money* and *Health Watchdogs* and all the others still gestating in the *Watchdog* cloning labs is that they cost almost nothing to make, once you've paid for Anne Robinson's wink. Hire a studio, fill it full of earnest young researchers staring at computer screens, commission some Important Sounding Music and — hey presto! — you've filled half an hour of valuable BBC1 peak-time. If you can provoke a few large companies to club together and denounce you in the press, all the better.

Watchdog itself was immortalised in public perception by the infamous Pop Tarts episode, when scores of dim viewers phoned in to complain that they had been scalded by the sugary breakfast snacks. It turned out that all of them had put them in their microwaves at too high a setting, but Anne Robinson, wagging her finely manicured index finger, placed the blame squarely on the manufacturers, despite the instructions printed clearly on the side of the packet. Since then it has been hard for many viewers to take the show seriously, but fortunately the show makes up for this by taking itself more seriously than anyone would have thought possible.

And yet, as the years pass, subtle changes can be noticed even in a series as unsubtle as *Watchdog*. The earnestness and the terrible humourlessness are still there, and Anne Robinson continues to lecture men in suits and pass judgement with almost McCarthyite zeal. (Muslim fundamentalists could take her correspondence course.)

Now, however, there is a threat to her pre-eminence in the comely shape of Alice Beer. Two or three series ago Alice was Anne's protégée, a younger and blonder version of the matriarch with a squished-up face and a fearsome schoolmarmish manner. At first Alice was sent out to make three-minute items about dodgy travel agents (who

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE MAD TO WORK HERE BUT IF YOU'RE A BIT CAMP OR SERIOUSLY IRRITATING YOU'LL PROBABLY GET TO STAR IN A DOCU-SOAP

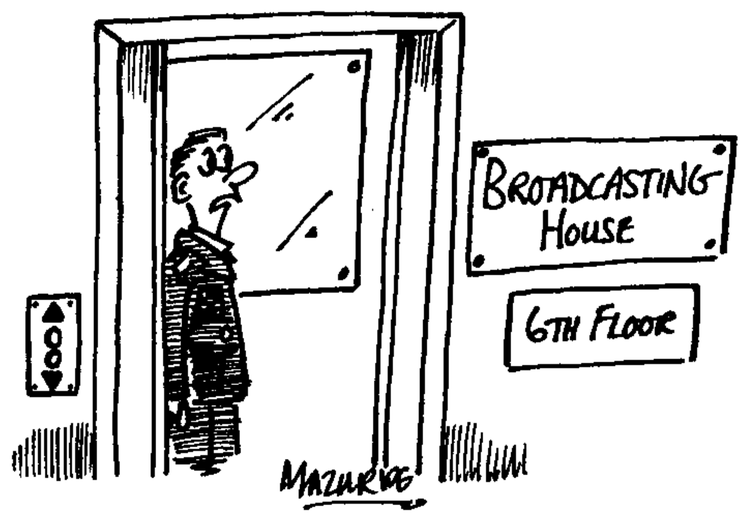
usually went out of business within a couple of weeks of the show). Soon she was turning up in the studio, sitting down with the other researchers and knowing her place: only Anne was allowed to stand up. But eventually Alice too was standing up, and even presenting pieces to camera while walking across the studio. Here were all the signs of a classic power struggle, which of course was far more interesting than anything in the actual show. Soon Alice was given her own spin-off series — *Shoes Watchdog*, or some such — and began to appear in programmes made beyond the empire's reach, such as Vic and Bob's recent LE pilot, *Families At War*.

Would the protegée eclipse her mentor? Throughout the summer hiatus *Watchdog* fans have waited to see how Anne would respond, and last week's show provided the answer. In between all the usual dull items about ruined holidays and duff motor cars, there was Alice sitting in front of a computer, just as she did in the old days — but in this series her task is to deal with the thousands of e-mails that pour in while the show is on air. Anne was clearly delighted by this arrangement, although Alice was swift to point out at the end of the show that most of the e-mails had come from randy old blokes asking her out to dinner. "I think you've done awfully well for your first night on e-mail," said Anne triumphantly as the credits rolled.

If *Watchdog* demonstrates what happens when presenters become bigger than the show, *Top Gear* takes the process one stage further, to a level of self-parody so acute you can barely remember what the show was about in the first place. In fact, *Top Gear* used to be about cars; now it's about Jeremy Clarkson, whose giant frame (and ego) only just fit into a once compact format.

But Clarkson too must look over his shoulder. Suddenly there is much more of Quentin Wilson than there used to be, and rather more of Tiff Needell than anyone really needs. Everyone is bigger than their subject matter, looking on to the next programme, the next giant career move. For as Anne, Alice, Jeremy, "Uncle Quent" (does he have to call himself that?) and co have discovered, these cheap little magazine shows are now the most surefire route to TV stardom. How else could we now be looking forward to that most surreal of entertainment concepts, the Jeremy Clarkson chat show? "Tonight on the show, my guests include Anne Robinson and Alice Beer..."

'Square Eyes'



"Dumbing down!"

MEDIA NEWS

"THE chief executives of BBC Production and Broadcast are urging staff to contribute their views about the future archiving of BBC assets." So runs the latest plea to employees in *Pravda* (aka *Ariel*), the BBC's propaganda rag.

At stake is the priceless archive of audio and video material: paid for by the licence-payer, held in trust for the nation — and now at the mercy of suits who want to release money to pay for 24-hour digital, audience-free broadcast drivel.

Their challenge is how to release the money without causing an outcry. The archives include the most precious recordings of the nation's history, as well as unrepeatable glimpses of countless artists and entertainers. If the wrong tapes were wiped it would be a PR disaster.

On the advice of an "archive steering group" elected by nobody, the BBC has farmed out the archive's fate to a private consultant, Arthur D. Little Ltd. It confidently expects archive users to air their views politely on *Pravda*'s letters page, avoiding the noisier avenues of protest available when the truth of what is happening sinks in. Problem solved, asset "maximised".

Meanwhile workshops are underway allowing "nominated champions" and "invited archive users" to give their views. Owing to lack of space, Arthur D. Little Ltd has no room to listen to uninvited, unnominated people (ie the licencepayers) who paid for this now priceless asset in the first place.

MEANWHILE the hunt is on at White City for the person or persons unknown who are literally robbing the BBC of its assets — a steady flow of laptops, DAT recorders, expensive microphones and highly saleable minidisks has been leaving the building for months.

Inactive security officers are at last adopting SAS-style tactics: snap-searches of cars and personal belongings are now common; and in the first week of operations an impressive quota of people were intercepted leaving the premises with expensive recording equipment in their bags.

After a lot of loud embarrassed squabbling, it turned out that *all* the suspects were reporters on their way to cover stories, often at short notice and with deadlines approaching. Meanwhile the robbers are carrying on regardless.

EYE-SKY-UNITED

An apology

IN THE past *Private Eye* may unfortunately have given the impression that its occasional series "Eye-Sky-B", about plugs for Rupert Murdoch TV stations masquerading as news stories in the Murdoch press, was some kind of joke.

In light of the events of the last week, however, during which readers of the *Sun* and the *Times* will have realised that Sky's takeover of Manchester United is a far more important event than the fall of President Clinton, the collapse of the Russian economy or even the possible demise of *Teletubbies*, we realise that it is no joke at all.

We now accept that the *Sun* in particular ("Gold Trafford! Sky deal makes Utd most valuable team in world"... "Skyly delighted — stars and fans hail deal"... "United shares soar in Sky deal frenzy"... "It's a deal — Sky buys Man Utd for £625m"...) has given up all pretence of being a real newspaper. We are happy to make it clear Mr Murdoch's titles are indeed nothing more than vehicles for furthering his worldwide business interests, and apologise wholeheartedly for ever having given any other impression.

THE BSkyB takeover of Manchester United will surely not be welcomed by one-time Glasgow Govan trades union activist, now Man Utd manager, Alex Ferguson.

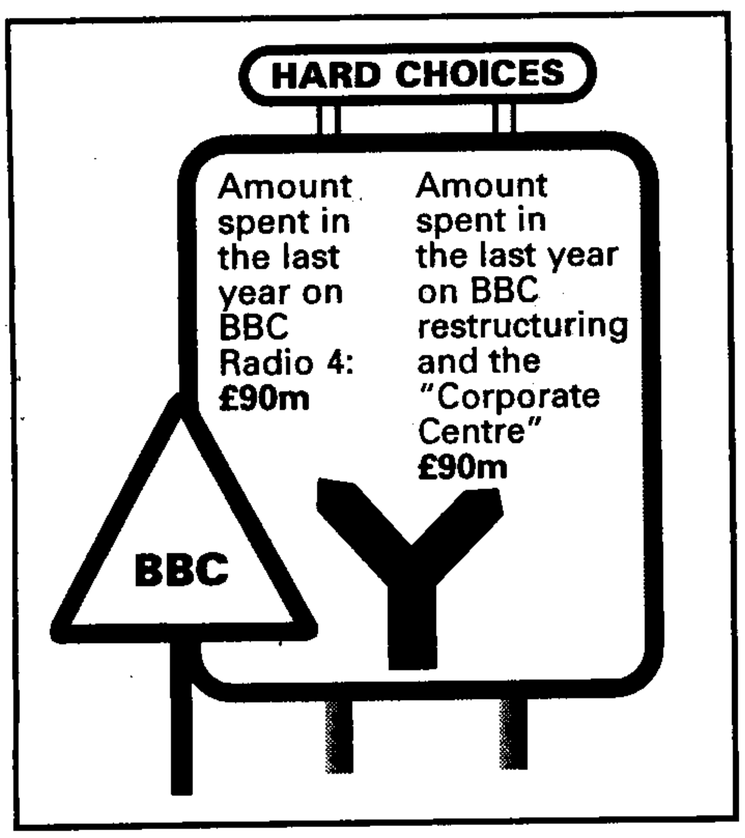
Even the fact that it could provide closer contact with his son who works as a director for Sky Sports won't please the Scotsman, who is not known for his congenial relations with TV sport broadcasters and consistently falls out with those whose line on Man Utd he disapproves of.

Recently, for example, he refused point blank to do an item for Sky News. How will the hot-tempered Ferguson cope when Sky TV's programmers tell Ferguson he *is* going to do this interview because they now employ him? There may be trouble ahead.

Meanwhile BBC executives are fuming about one of their presenter's outburst over the takeover: "It could lead to a golden age for the club," said Radio 1 DJ and *Live and Kicking* presenter Zoe Ball, described as a "die-hard Manchester United fan" by the Murdoch-owned *Sun*.

MORE from Border Television where the chief executive, the chairman's wife and a non-executive director all bought shares in the station shortly before a takeover bid was announced and the share price rose (see last *Eye*).

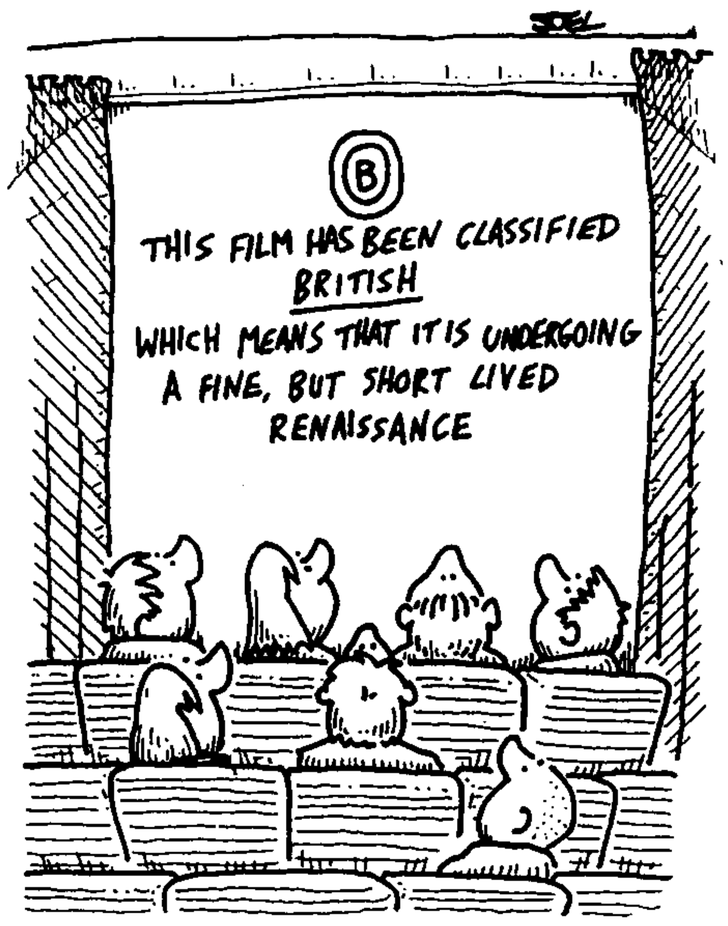
It was claimed that all this was above board because news of the takeover had been leaked to the Border-owned *Cumberland News*. But it now transpires this was an even cosier arrangement than it first appeared. David Trimble, the non-executive director who benefited from the share rise, is also on the board of Cumberland Newspapers, while the chair of *Cumberland News*, Robin Burgess, is on the board of Border Television.


HARD CHOICES
Amount spent in the last year on BBC Radio 4: £90m
Amount spent in the last year on BBC restructuring and the "Corporate Centre" £90m
BBC

BAD news for loud-mouthed Sky TV presenter and *Sun* columnist Richard Littlejohn: he's been told to shut up.

For £750,000 Littlejohn had signed a two-year contract with the Murdoch empire to write two columns a week in the *Sun* while presenting his weekly talk show on Sky, *Live and Unleashed*.

Alas, Littlejohn's yobbish charm proved so irresistible to Sky viewers that *Live and Unleashed* has been axed a year early.



VANESSA FELTZ has achieved what everyone thought impossible: her enforced departure from milord Hollick's Anglia TV has united management and workforce in jubilation, and sent company morale soaring.

The pleasure is particularly intense among researchers, security men and other menials who were regularly forced to undertake tasks which she could easily perform for herself. The tiniest parcels and bags had to be carried from her car to her dressing room, a palatial suite which formed a substantial part of the rateable value of Anglia's premises.

Even staff at the Norwich branch of Pizza Express are glad she's gone. They still recall the foot-stamping tantrums when she waddled in and the resident pianist Mike Cappocci failed immediately to play the *Vanessa* theme tune — largely because he hadn't the faintest idea who she was.

WHO will win the contract to sell sandwiches at the Greenwich dome? Incredibly the New Millennium Experience Company has decided there will be only one single catering contract to cover the whole site.

Dome bosses claim that because of "tight access" to Peter Mandelson's marvel they need to have only one supplier. This means the contract could be incredibly valuable. Industry sources put the contract's gross profit at 20 percent of a predicted turnover of £75-£100m.

There are four main contenders and although dome bosses refuse to name them, trade paper *Caterer and Hotelkeeper* says an educated guess would include Granada Food Services, Gardner Merchant and Compass.

The *Eye* is backing Granada. After all, its head Gerry Robinson has put cash in "new" Labour coffers and chairs the Arts Council. The magic seems to have worked so far, with Granada winning the massive privatisation of the post office caterer Quadrant and the British Library contract.

The fact that Granada television is making a six-part documentary on the scientific and technological achievements in the dome can't harm the caterer's chances either.

THE European Union, which now seeks to control just about everything in the public sector, has elaborate rules about its subsidiary governments putting contracts out to tender.

In particular long term, big budget opportunities which could boost a company's turnover by many hundreds of thousands or even millions of pounds are supposed to be advertised in the press.

Strangely though, the Northern Ireland Office has decided not to bother advertising for applicants to televise the proceedings of the new Ulster Assembly (assuming it gets off the ground).

Instead the contract to provides Westminster-style TV and radio coverage has been awarded to Macmillan Media, a company owned by the BBC's former Middle East correspondent, Michael Macmillan.

No other company was given the opportunity to tender, though presumably Mo Mowlem has a very good reason for taking this carefree approach to public expenditure.

THE 2,500 British employees of the HFC Bank, a £5bn merger between two American loan companies, have received a free video featuring their chief executive Adrian Hill and the BBC's star interviewer John Humphrys.

In a letter accompanying the video, Hill says Humphrys "is known for asking the difficult questions and as you will see from this short video programme he lived up to his reputation".

Er, not quite. In the "interview" which follows there is not a trace of the combative and challenging Humphrys known to the *Today* programme or viewers of *On the Record*. Instead Humphrys pats up soft questions for Hill effectively to counter.

He meekly accepted Hill's suave assurances that "nice guys don't come first" and that the newly-merged company would have to lose 700 jobs and be "pretty brutal" about it. One question not asked was whether the company thinks that its employees will not be offended by this feeble corporate video starring a normally fearless BBC journalist who has clearly been paid a small fortune to lend weight to a puff job.

> But, India has rejected the offer arguing that it can take better care of its unclear weapon's programme and doesn't require outside assistance in this regard.
>
> *The News (Islamabad)*

Number crunching

$1,000m

■ is the amount being paid out by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp for Manchester United

$100m

■ is the total amount being paid out yearly in tax worldwide by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp

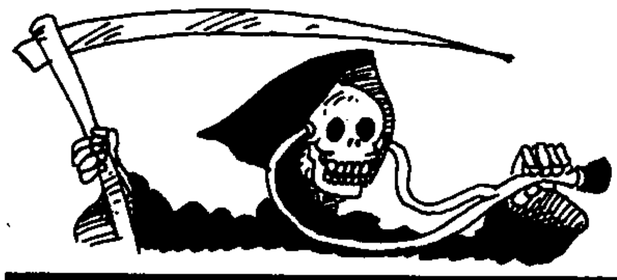
Diana balls

"REMEMBER DIANA — WEEKEND DANCES. Singles, Unattached, Divorced. Dress Code. Over 25s. Friday: Dumpton Leisure Centre Nightclub, Ramsgate, 8pm-1am. Sunday: Lido Night Spot, Cliftonville. Free Buffet. Free Snowball at all venues. Admission £3."

— *Adscene* (Kent newspaper).

"The World's Most Loved Adorable Angel, Free At Last. Consider the heavenly possibilities: a super realistic animated feature film, *Princess Diana Saves the World*. Equity available, major studio participation welcome."

— Ad in *Variety*.



DOING THE ROUNDS

AN inauspicious start for Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, the UK's biggest, formed in April from the merger of the city's two major hospitals.

First came news that a Leeds woman with painful knees had been given an orthopaedic appointment at St James' Hospital in the year 2001 (*Eye* 953). Now health select committee chairman David Hinchliffe has complained that a pensioner with a cripplingly painful arthritic hip has been given an appointment for February 1999 — not bad until you realise she's already been waiting for *more than three years*.

Meanwhile the trust is investigating how a frail 79-year-old at the same hospital was found lying in a pool of blood having fallen from a trolley while waiting unattended for an X-ray. She died two weeks later.

● A PATIENT recently turned up to ear, nose and throat outpatients at **Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust** and was turned away for being a year early. He hadn't spotted that the waiting time for a routine appointment (the time taken to see a doctor *before* you go on the waiting list) is 60 weeks.

This is totally unacceptable but not surprising when you consider there are more ENT consultants in New York state than the whole of the UK and clinics are already ludicrously busy. One junior ENT surgeon in **Leicester** regular sees more than 30 patients in a three-hour outpatient clinic and his record is 44. This works out at four minutes per patient, including turnaround time, when the recommended appointment time is 15 minutes. Clinics become cattle markets and everyone ends up dissatisfied.

The obvious solution is to train more junior staff and create more consultant posts. Alas, this can meet barriers from managers ("too expensive") and existing consultants who don't want anyone cutting into their lucrative private work. In Southampton an "associate specialist" has been taken on after the appointment of a full consultant was vetoed. Why? Er, because it's in patients' best interests of course!

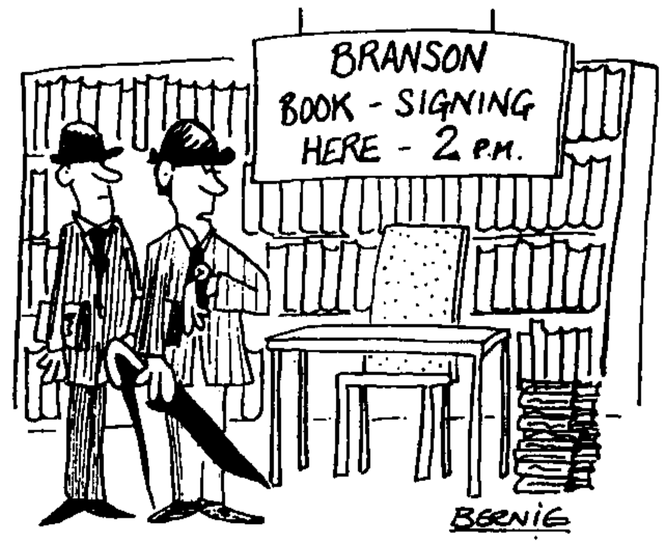
Associate specialists cost less but very few are accredited for their training, some have repeatedly failed membership or fellowship of their royal college and the ones I've met are deeply unhappy and disillusioned with their lot. They can never become consultants but are allowed to do a lot of the consultant's work, usually unsupervised. This is hardly a guarantee of the quality health secretary Frank Dobson bangs on about, and yet the *British Medical Journal*'s job section is full of adverts for... associate specialists.

● In the short term Dobson is trying to solve the problem of long waiting lists by paying consultants private size fees to operate on NHS patients in private hospitals at weekends. For example, the orthopaedic consultants in Southampton have received £2.5m to get their lists down. But this strategy — used unsuccessfully by the Tories — comes on the back of a report by the charity Action for Victims of Medical Accidents which has found a disproportionate number of claims are from the private sector. Key factors are the lack of emergency equipment and medical expertise. Private hospitals are not the places to be in an emergency. Conveyor-belt waiting list reductions are invariably very expensive, poorly planned and doomed to fail — let's hope they aren't placing patients at extra risk of medical accidents too.

Meanwhile Dobson is also having a hard time convincing punters that closing or downgrading local hospitals and centralising services in larger specialist units is a good idea. This week the East Kent "Save our Hospitals" campaign is camped in Whitehall to protest about plans to downgrade the **Kent and Canterbury hospital**, and protesters in **South Wales** recently packed out a public meeting to resist the threat to closure of **Llandough hospital** by **Bro Taf health authority**. Chest surgery has already been stopped there and patients are being transferred to **University Hospital of Wales** in **Cardiff**.

The arguments for and against centralising are complex. For rare operations there is no excuse not to limit it to a few specialist centres and cancer treatment also benefits from a specialist approach. However, for many common procedures there is not always evidence that specialist centres do better than district general hospitals. Certainly the people of South Wales and East Kent are not convinced the argument is about quality rather than money.

M.D.



"He's 20 minutes late...

SIGNAL FAILURES

Excusewatch

THE PR geniuses who gave us "the wrong kind of $now" are in greater demand than ever in the privatised railway as worsening performance gives rise to the need for ever-more creative explanations.

More than twice as many complaints were made to the rail users' committees in 1997-98 than the previous year, but the rail industry was far from ashamed. Most people were not complaining but asking for compensation, said one spokesman. Another said train companies welcome feedback from customers and what the media misinterpreted as complaints were actually valued market research. Yet another reason offered was: "Passengers' expectations are rising faster than the industry's ability to satisfy them." So that's all right, then.

Perhaps the most common explanation for rising complaints is that they are a direct consequence of train operators making complaining easier. Ivor Warburton, chairman of the association of train operating companies (Atoc), whines: "It is unfair to applaud train operators for actively encouraging people to complain, then to criticise us when complaint figures rise."

Perhaps it is also unfair to point out that the latest rise in complaints coincided with a 22 percent deterioration in punctuality and cancellations — or that at least one train company has removed the passenger's charter posters from its trains so people have no idea where to send their complaints.

Another Atoc representative, Christopher Garnett, acknowledged the link between complaints and pisspoor performance but couldn't let it rest there. He had to explain that there was a lot of work to be done to redress historic under-investment in the railways — in other words it's BR's fault for not looking after the network properly.

If this explanation for poor performance holds water, the worst delays should be on lines most neglected by BR, which completed two major route upgrades in the 1990s. BR rebuilt the Chiltern route to Aylesbury — yet Chiltern Railways has cancelled so many trains it now has to spend £2.5m on a package of "passenger benefits". The other company that cannot reasonably complain about under-investment is Great North Eastern Railway which took over the King's Cross to Edinburgh service after a £500m modernisation. GNER is still failing to meet its passenger's charter standard for punctuality and registers increased delays in the latest official figures. The chief executive of GNER is, er, Christopher Garnett.

We are told lack of money is the root of the problem — but so is too much money. Spin doctor general John O'Brien, aka the franchising director, said: "The unwanted side effect [of extra passengers] has been a detrimental impact on punctuality." The idea is to turn defence into attack and show how well the train companies are doing to attract so many extra passengers. For this to work the public has to be ignorant of the fact that passenger numbers always grow when the economy booms, and that extra passengers bring in cash for more staff to be employed and more carriages to be leased to ensure the trains run on time.

The most accurate explanations are often the most improbable and embarrassing ones, like "the wrong kind of snow". Great Western Trains blamed rainfall, that freak occurrence in western Britain, for some of its many delays this year. Such is Railtrack's ineptitude at maintaining the route that this explanation, for once, was true.

'Dr B. Ching'

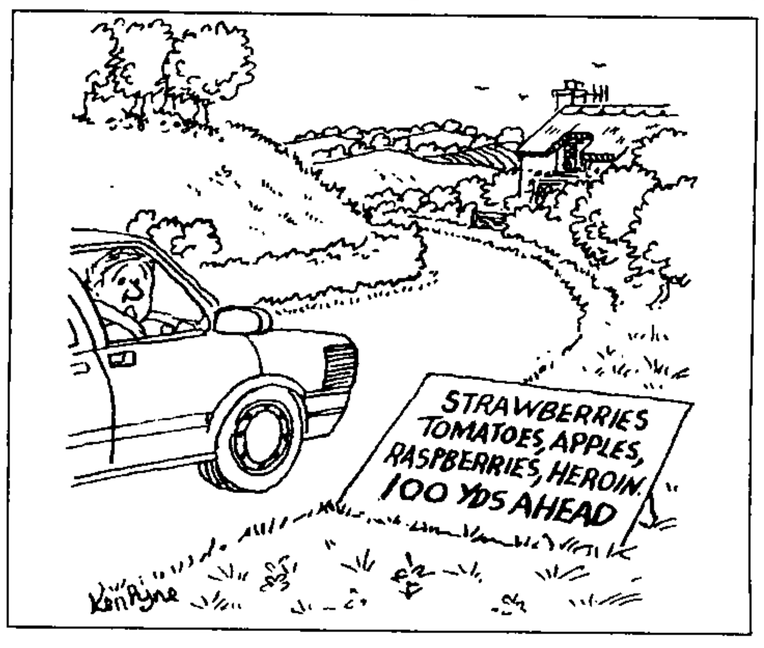
DOWN ON THE FARM

Mad sheep

TO MARK the end of the silly season the BBC and *Guardian* made a gallant bid to panic the nation into a major new food scare revealing that "sheep can catch BSE". The only way to save lamb-eaters from a fate worse than death, a "government scientist" was allowed to intone on the BBC, would be to destroy every sheep in the country. More than 40 million of them.

Of course there *isn't* any evidence to suggest sheep can catch BSE. There has never been a single case of one doing so. But if in laboratory conditions you inject sheep's brains with enough BSE-contaminated material, a few will eventually show symptoms of a condition not unlike BSE, without actually being BSE.

Indeed even this wasn't a new story. It had all been run in the *Times*, to general lack of interest, several weeks earlier. So the only puzzle was: who was behind this campaign?



In this case there were three main candidates. First was the "government scientist" himself, Prof Jeff Almond, a member of the SEAC committee behind the original "BSE can cause CJD". The professor has been pushing his "mad sheep" theory for some years and it was his pronouncements which set off this latest panic.

A second candidate, volubly in evidence as the new scare broke, was the Consumers' Association (CA), also represented on SEAC. As the leading agitator for the setting up of the new food standards agency (FSA), the CA has been alarmed by hints that "new" Labour is cooling on its plans to put through the FSA bill in the next parliamentary session. Cynics suggest the CA might have been keen to drum up a new scare to show why the agency is so urgently needed.

A third candidate was the animal rights lobby, well-represented in the Consumers' Association and keenly aware the "Farmers Ferry" scheme is about to go into operation, transporting millions of live lambs across the Channel to be slaughtered in France. If only the French could be scared into demanding a ban on imports of BSE-infected British sheep, the argument ran, the ferry scheme would collapse. Thousands of sheep farmers would go bankrupt. Millions of lambs would thus be saved from suffering — by the simple fact that they wouldn't get born in the first place.

The simple answer is that the scare was set in motion by a combination of all three. But what must also not be overlooked is the increasing unease of all those involved in the original BSE/CJD panic who are finding, as time goes on, more and more awkward questions being asked about their role in the disaster. Much better that the "Mad Sheep" in the media revive the scare in a new form.

'Even Newer Muckspreader'

Rotten Boroughs

The Dirty Doctor

IN ALL the hoo-ha about jailed conman "Dr" Godwin Onubogu, no one bothered to ask how he was able to set up his two infamous "clinics" in Tory Wandsworth.

Wandsworth council emphasised that it had "been trying for years to have Onubogu's laboratory testing company shut down". Which is true, after a fashion — but not as half as interesting as the fact that the council went to great lengths to set up the clinics in the first place.

Wandsworth Enterprise Agency was set up by Wandsworth Tories during the long reign of Thatcher-worshipper Paul Beresford. It lobbed ratepayers' money into the pockets of thrusting entrepreneurs, and when "Dr" Onubogo came along with precisely no qualifications except a gift for graft and babble and proposed a "clinic" which would compete with the dangerously socialist national health service, Wandsworth's thrifty Tories welcomed him with open arms.

How much public money did he get? A Wandsworth council spokesman, usually very informative, said: "I'm afraid we don't know — not very much anyway." The spokesman confirmed that the mayor of Wandsworth had attended the opening of one of the "clinics". Who was that? "We don't know, I'm sorry." When was that? "We don't know, I'm sorry."

FACT: After seven years leading Wandsworth council, Paul Beresford was knighted and soon afterwards became a Tory minister. He is Tory MP for Mole Valley.

In Labour Hackney, meanwhile, voters should perhaps spare a thought for Bernard Crofton, the former housing director recently pilloried in the press for his attitude to West Africans after ex-colleague Sam Yeboah won his race discrimination case against the council.

Funnily enough it was Onubogu, as the *Eye* pointed out in March 1997, who was one of the chief perpetrators of recruitment fraud in the borough, filling out scores of references for unqualified West Africans who wanted council jobs. Onubogu signed these references "Dr Onubogu, Medpath Housing and Welfare Division". And who was it from Hackney council who discovered that Medpath didn't exist? Bernard Crofton.

Manchester

LET no one forget Manchester's *other* big-money football story: how the city council is bailing out ailing Manchester City FC and ripping off the public at the same time.

The scam is part of the council's plan to build a new 50,000-capacity sports stadium, Eastlands, in the rundown east of the city to host the 2002 Commonwealth games. The cost, £90m and rising, is so far being met by £77m sports council lottery money and £13m from the council, which is partly running the games.

But the games will yield little; so how can the council justify spending so much public money on a white elephant with a three-week lifespan? The council claims that once the games finish a tenant will arrive in the shape of... Manchester City FC, which in 2003 will move from Moss Side and pay rent to use Eastlands.

That was the plan, anyway — but it has now been ruined by City's demotion to football's third highest division. Having lost premiership TV and European cup money, and having spent a fortune rebuilding its Maine Road stadium, City is in a financial mess. So a deal has been hatched in which instead of paying rent at Eastlands, City will become part-owners. This is great news for the club but a big blow to taxpayers who will also co-own the proposed stadium but never recoup their investment.

The public's only chance of keeping its cash is if the project goes the way of most of Manchester's recent grandiose refurbishment schemes — and never leaves the drawing board.

Westminster

TORIES in Westminster seem to be up to their old tricks again: they are clamping down on officers' plans to regenerate rundown (Labour) parts of the borough.

Although Tory council leaders set up a regeneration unit to tidy up blighted areas in the mid-1990s, no work actually took place. When officers recently decided to spend £2m on regeneration Tory leaders went ballistic and banned all staff from having anything to do with the plans. After all, if slummy council estates in Kensal Rise and Maida Hill get a lick of paint and new CCTV cameras, the residents might still vote Labour rather than Tory.

Meanwhile — and despite universal condemnation of gerrymandering — homeless families are still being dumped in seedy B&B hotels around Paddington station where, quite coincidentally, their Labour votes won't upset the balance of power.

Twin Town

COUN Ray Cole, chairman of Aberystwyth town council's twinning committee, decreed that a brochure be published to celebrate the west Wales town's link-up with St Briec in France.

No doubt anxiety to further *entente cordiale* persuaded him to bend the rules of competitive tendering and award the contract to his daughter Denise. Two councillors have resigned in protest and are expected to call in the ombudsman over this exercise in nepotism.

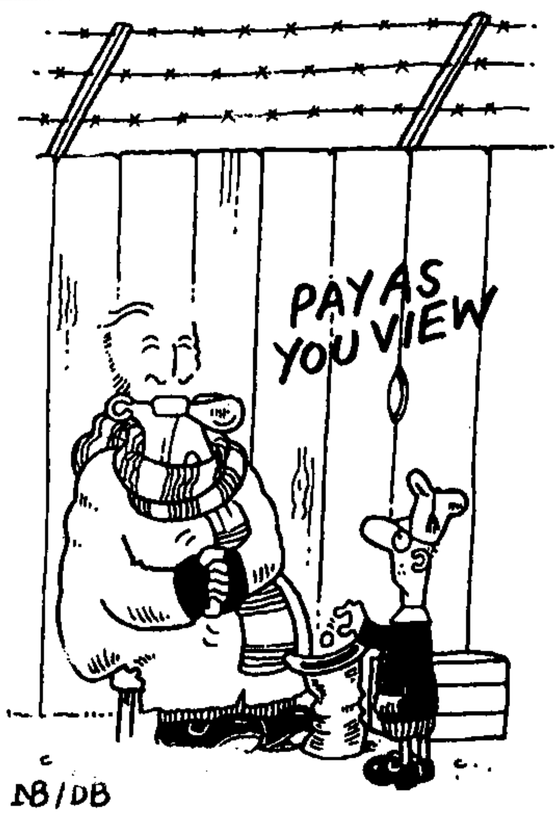
Newbury

NEWBURY council officers and four major developers have been caught working in cahoots to steamroller proposals through a public inquiry to build a new village in west Berkshire.

The development at Sandleford Park includes the building of 1,700 houses and has attracted largescale local opposition. Four developers, Trencherwood, McAlpine, Trafalgar House and Queensgate Homes, generously agreed to pay for expert witnesses to testify at a recent public inquiry on behalf of the pre-unitary Newbury district council. However, councillors were kept in the dark about the developers' role at the inquiry and were staggered to learn that more than £100,000 was spent by the developers on the council's behalf without them being told.

Trencherwood was the most generous of the four. It paid for a barrister and two "expert" witnesses. Back in the spring of this year, council chief executive Stella Manzie failed to tell councillors that the cash was accepted from developers. When questioned she merely said the issue was "potentially sensitive". An inquiry by the council's director of planning followed. It decided that it was not a good idea for the council to accept money from contractors without telling its councillors first — otherwise public confidence in planning procedures might be affected.

NEW OLD SAYINGS



Money For Old Rupe

Pseuds Corner

This jacket was my first Prada purchase, and was a birthday present to myself. It has been worth every penny, even though I could have bought a small house in Wales with the money. It's English classicism with a modern Italian edge. I wear it to every official outing I go to, and I am always told 'Stuart that's lovely Prada,' or I'm asked, 'Where did you get that?' The best was at the opening of the Miu Miu shop. Miuccia Prada ran her finger across the chest of the jacket and smiled knowingly at me.

STUART BOTTING
Independent Magazine

Space opens up worlds of sunshine and new hope thoughts projected into light... Journey's end and journey's beginning time stands still the soft breeze of a remembered warmth enfolds the spirit in the horizon's natural embrace... The air breaths pure lives, measuring the distant calm and caressing the skin in an overwhelming present... Light projected into thought reflected back into the landscape of the soul...

Viyella's Summer 1998 catalogue

What we need to concentrate on is the shopping experience as a species of praxis; a union of action and reification which nullifies traditional Marxist categories of surplus value.

WILL SELF
Times Magazine

Although unproductive here, Michael Atherton has discovered the high plateau that exists beyond experienced complexity. He has returned to the simplicity of his original game and will not easily be shifted because it is now the product of mature reason. Batting is the realisation of the discovered self.

PETER ROEBUCK
Sunday Telegraph

But contemplate this navel in the body of the world, with a naval tradition that has unfurled British influence globally. Ten million Britons overseas. Sixty million at home. An influence based on open trade and creative exchange, on movement, on learning and revolving ideas, on the positive sparks that fire from cultural mix. So we are showing here how ideas grow and spread, whetting the stone, engraving the image, making life and permanence, strengthening trade and friendship. The politics of oceans in the shift of time. Thus the droplet gem and the ripple, the steam rising, the precision of nature, the horizon and silverlining, the spectrum of possibility, the form created, the crescendo... and something else! A creative island in its silent evolution.

Brochure from Lisbon Expo

It is a partnership that might work, not least because of its contrasts. Atherton, of course, is cerebral, a head full of thoughts, his pen full of wry observations and his being limited by the Prufrockian want of spontaneity that prevents members of the intelligencia from simply jumping into a pool and splashing about.

PETER ROE-BUCK
Sunday Telegraph

CONTRIBUTORS: M.D. Grieve, Russell G. Payne, Jonathan Fenton-Fischer, Charl Engela, Anon, Mike Clark.

£10 paid for entries

Letters

Wakey Wakeham

Sir,

I am afraid you must have confused the Press Complaints Commission with some other regulatory organisation. Far from our wheel grinding "exceeding slow" with a "huge backlog of complaints" (EYE *958), the PCC's engine purrs like a Rolls Royce. I pride myself on the fact that nine out of ten complaints are dealt with in 40 working days — and many much quicker than that.*

You must have also confused Mirror Group Newspapers with some other organisation. Of the 2,000 or so complaints we have received against all newspapers and magazines this year, there are only 31 outstanding complaints (about 1.5 percent) against MGN titles. Of these just five have been with us for more than 40 working days.

Yours in haste,
JOHN WAKEHAM,

Press Complaints Commission, London EC4.

● *The figure of 110 complaints against Mirror Group so far this year was provided by the PCC. We should have made clear that not all of these are outstanding. Ed.*

Branston pickle?

Sir,

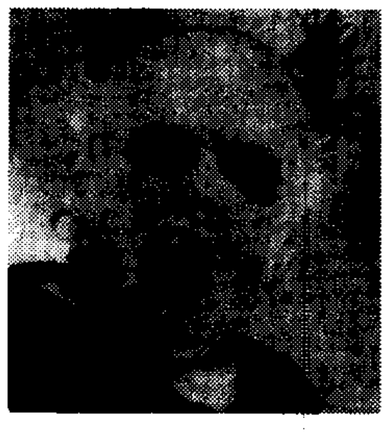
Would Frank Branston ("Odd Couplings", 958) care to explain why he was reading Eye Love with such close attention that he noticed the grammatical errors?

T. TILLIN,

Belper, Derbyshire.

Lookalike

Flint



Owl

Sir,

I wonder if any other your readers have noticed the remarkable similarity between Keith Flint, front man of the band The Prodigy, and a tawny owl on heat?

Are they by any chance related?

Yours sincerely,
DANIEL FORD,

London SW12.

Talking ballots

Sir,

Hats off to the EYE *for exposing the "secret" ballot scandal in Labour's NEC election!*

There was I, innocently imagining that the independent scrutineers might just be able to separate ballot papers from competition entries, when all the time they're stapling them together and sending them on to Millbank.

The alternative — that Unity Ballot Services are above reproach, and that your lack of basic research would shame Lunchtime O'Booze himself — is surely impossible.

Yours,
STEVE DONNELLY,

London W3.

Snap Unhappy

Sir,

In a recent GUARDIAN *interview (14 Sept), Andrew Neill complains that* PRIVATE EYE *persists in printing the same old photograph of him and his charming companion. He believes that his numerous admirers would prefer to see an updated version. I wonder — do you have anything suitable in your files?*

Yours faithfully,
ENA B. MANNORAK,

London W2.

Harlow's tale

Sir,

Re: Harlow, Rotten Boroughs, EYE *956. I am sorry that I have to ruin a classic story of a ruling Labour group doing "favours to chums who run up debt", with a few facts and corrections to the inaccuracies which afflict every sentence. It is not so much "rotten borough" as rotten journalism.*

We have always paid a commercial rent for premises (we rented an office, not two branches as claimed) and at the moment are £600 in credit in the rent account.

The alleged rent arrears date back to 1991/92 when the Harlow Labour party shared facilities with the council's leisure department. The latter owed the Labour party money for electricity and gas charges. The estates section in a rent review proposed a threefold increase in the rent (some favour) which we disputed and continued to pay at the old rate. It was amicably resolved with a doubling of the rent and leisure paying off the backlog of the rent owed. The alleged arrears were left on the finance computer and surfaced with the recent review of historic debt. A full investigation was held by the council treasurer and we produced the paperwork to verify the above account. We have now received a public apology from the general manager of Harlow council for the mistake.

As for Councillor Feroz Khan (not Kahn) who rented a shop (not a bakery), the council followed normal procedure and slapped a court order on his debt which he has regularly paid (some favour).

Yours sincerely,
IAN TURNER,

Harlow Labour Party Press Officer.

Meat & Bone Meal

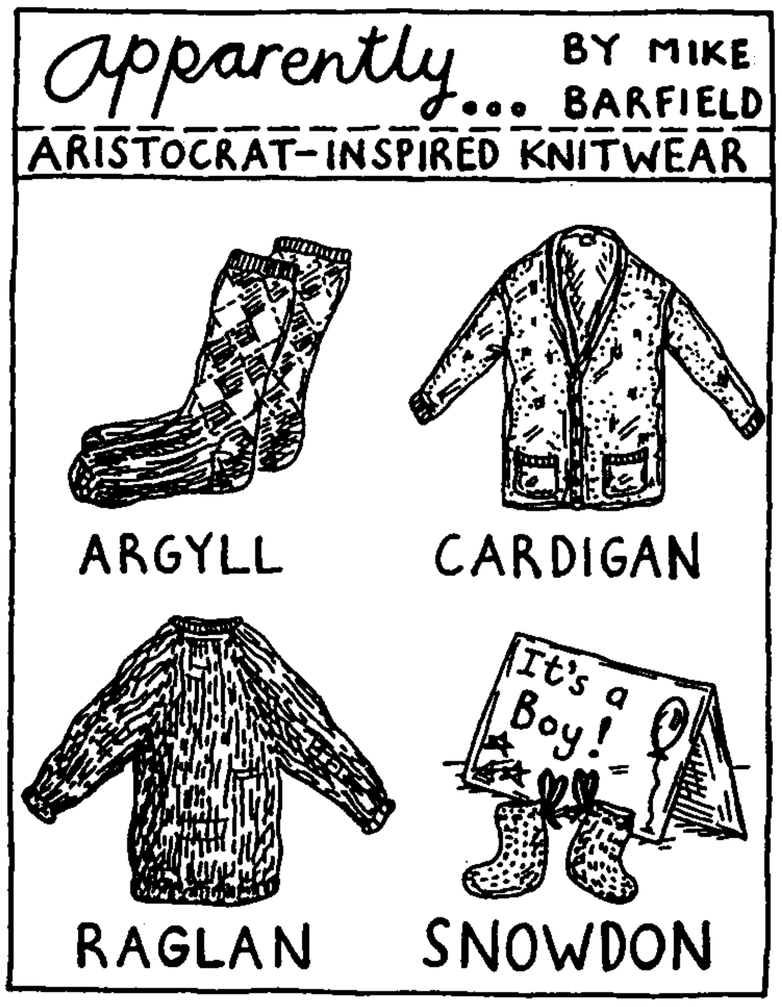
Sir,

I understand how annoying it must be for Dr Eamonn O'Dwyer of the all powerful EU commission to be corrected on matters of record by Messrs Mulholland and Salmon (Letters, 958), but I am afraid I must repeat the offence. The book I quoted, correcting Dr O'Dwyer's original errors on traditional farming practice, was not a "**questionable outdated reference**"*. It was co-authored by the Sibthorpian Professor of Rural Economy, University of Oxford, and a Lecturer in Agriculture, University of Edinburgh. It was not published in 1892 but in 1941.*

Dr O'Dwyer boasts that he can't find books from 1892 in the EU commission library. The Bible, the Koran, Shakespeare, Homer and Plato all predate 1892. MEIN KAMPF *doesn't.*

Yours spinelessly,
SIMON MULHOLLAND,

Brightlingsea, Essex.



Sir,

Dr Eamonn O'Dwyer (4 Sep) has done us all a good service.

He has plainly shown the towering arrogance and indefectible ignorance which, as many have long suspected, lurk behind the façade of Brussels.

A Terrible Beauty is born. We have it ex cathedra — if something is not in the EU library, then it does not exist. Is this the same library where the auditors reported a cost of £43,000 per volume loaned?

Yours sincerely,
EDWARD SPALTON,

Chester Green, Derby.

Screen test

Sir,

M.D.'s positive comments about the treatment of abdominal aneurysms at Chichester (Doing the Rounds, 957) were greatly appreciated.

M.D.'s reported post screening death rate from rupture of 0 percent and a potential saving of 60,000 lives per annum were wonderful, but unfortunately imaginative — some (elderly people) will always be too unfit for surgery or refuse on religious or other grounds, and a potential saving of 50,000 lives over **ten** *years is nearer the mark. The practice of screening for abdominal aortic aneurysms in men is increasing thanks to a government grant to pilot a larger screening study. If this trial shows screening is as good as M.D. suggests, I would hope it will become available to patients at centres with surgeons "who do enough of the procedures to ensure they are good at them" as M.D. so eloquently puts it.*

Yours sincerely,
R.A.P. SCOTT, MS FRCS,

Consultant Surgeon, St Richard's Hospital, Chichester.

Sir,

Doing the Rounds on aneurysms in EYE *957 was a feature of great interest to me. I had a ruptured aorta last December and apart from a leg weakness, have recovered. The article provided more information (and reassurance) than I've been able to prise out of any number of medics.*

Another aspect of this is the drain on the Blood Transfusion Service. I have been an enthusiastic blood donor, but my 50-plus donations wouldn't cover two such illnesses as mine.

It wouldn't be too difficult for the NHS to cost out the treatment of aneurysms. (In my case four months in hospitals, another five months' incapacity and more to come, scores of visits by/to physios, GPs, health visitors, and out-patients.)

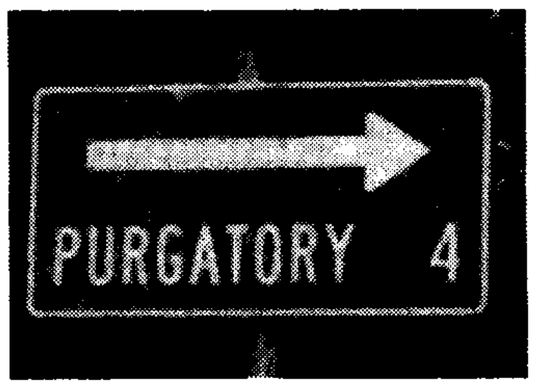
Screening over-50s ought to produce a net gain to the NHS, not to mention the DHSS (sic), employers and insurance companies.

Yours truly,
JEFFREY GOULD,

Macclesfield, Cheshire.

I-SPY

Laval, France



Massachusetts

Submitted by **Bill Freedman** and **Norman Harper**. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Polly maths

Sir,

Last issue's Order of the Brown Nose was a rather cheap shot. The paragraph you printed suggested columnist Polly Toynbee was in thrall to Peter Mandelson — in fact, readers could be forgiven for thinking she fancied him. But, of course, those few lines were lifted from a two-column GUARDIAN *piece in which la Toynbee savaged the sinister minister under the headline "The Canker at the Heart of Labour". A thousand words of splenetic vituperation and you cherry-pick the only 40-odd that didn't excoriate the cankerous Mandy.*

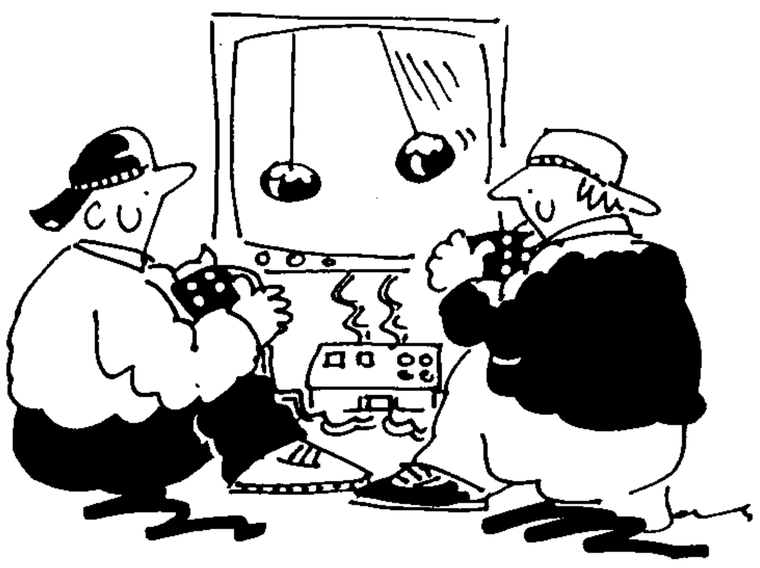
By quoting so completely out of context, you have shaken my belief that absolutely everything in the EYE *is always completely true and unbiased. It's enough to make me renew my subscription.*

ANDY FARQUARSON,

Rugby, Warks.

PS: Do I get the OBN for leaping to Toynbee's defence?

Autumn



Good return?

Sir,

*You were surprised (*EYE *957) that Vernons' Easy Play, the new National Lottery football game, pays a different prize percentage from other National Lottery games. In fact, different lottery games do pay different prize percentages according to the market.*

At 40 percent, the prize percentage for Easy Play compares with 45 percent for the National Lottery on-line game.

You also mentioned Camelot's and Vernons' costs and profit. Camelot's share should allow them broadly the same return after tax as they make on existing National Lottery games (less than 1 percent). We expect the return to Vernons to be a little but not much higher than that. This is justifiable given in particular that they have a comparatively limited period (three years) to earn a return on their investment.

The Good Causes will get broadly the same return from Easy Play as from existing National Lottery games.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN STOKER,

Director General, National Lottery.

Novel point

Sir,

"Mart's new one is HEAVY WATER, *his first book of short stories." (Literary Review). Is* EINSTEIN'S MONSTERS *a novel, then?*

MIKE MORRIS,

Oxford.

Lounge lizard?

Sir,

Henceforth wouldn't it be a good idea for your august organ to refer to Rupert Murdoch as "Rupert Moloch"? The CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY *reveals — "Canaanite idol to whom children were sacrificed; thorn-lizard, a hideous Australian Reptile."*

Yours sincerely,
MARK HINCHCLIFFE,

Via e-mail.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Warm words from President Clinton to Mo Mowlam, she's obviously gone down very well with him!"
ELEANOR OLDROYD, Radio 5 Live
(Mike Waring)

"Has Monica Lewinsky blown it for the President?"
SCOTT CHISHOLM, Talk Radio
(Dan James)

"Bidding has already started for her [Monica Lewinsky] blow-by-blow account."
Capital FM News
(John Campbell)

"The Gold, Silver and Bronze will be won by one of this five."
DAVID COLEMAN, BBC
(Peter Freeman)

"He [Michael Owen] is a goal scorer, not a natural born one — not yet. That takes time."
GLENN HODDLE, The Sun
(Adrian Mulholland)

"...and, keeping the Irish theme going, Sibelius is our composer of the week."
PETROC TRELAWNEY, Radio 3
(Mr J.G. Fowler)

Letter from Malaysia

from Our Own Correspondent

WHILE our prime minister Dr Mahathir welcomed competitors to the Commonwealth Games with a lecture on "Asian values", if the Malaysian sports judges behave like those in our courts, we are in line for our best gold medal tally ever.

Odd that Dr Mahathir should wait until the country is full of foreign hacks before dispensing with his deputy, Anwar Ibrahim. Dr Mahathir is unusually reticent about why he moved against his heir-apparent and our tame local press will never reveal the truth. But it is not that Anwar is corrupt.

On the contrary: Anwar has been destroyed because he had courageously agreed to move against a coterie of crooked judges, lawyers and businessmen who were powerful enough for Mahathir himself to step in to protect them.

Until now the country's judges have done a good job protecting themselves by jailing critics for contempt of court and by bankrupting inquisitive journalists with massive libel awards. A few months ago, however, some senior barristers took evidence of judicial misbehaviour to Anwar, who agreed to authorise an investigation by the anti-corruption agency. But now Anwar himself faces corruption charges and his punishment will, in due course, be a prison sentence upheld (if not increased) by the Malaysian judicial system.

Only last month an 18-month jail sentence was approved for opposition leader Lim Guan Eng for the crimes of "spreading false news" and "slandering the judiciary". The news spread by Lim was that Mahathir's attorney-general had improperly refused to prosecute one of Mahathir's chief ministers for his involvement in the gang rape of a young girl, and that the courts had covered up for the politician.

The judgment made it clear that anyone who dared criticise the judiciary would go straight to prison. That should silence the criticism that needs to be made of the judges and the suggestions that they regularly take bribes from lawyers to decide cases in favour of their clients, or arrange for their cases to be heard by other pliant judges.

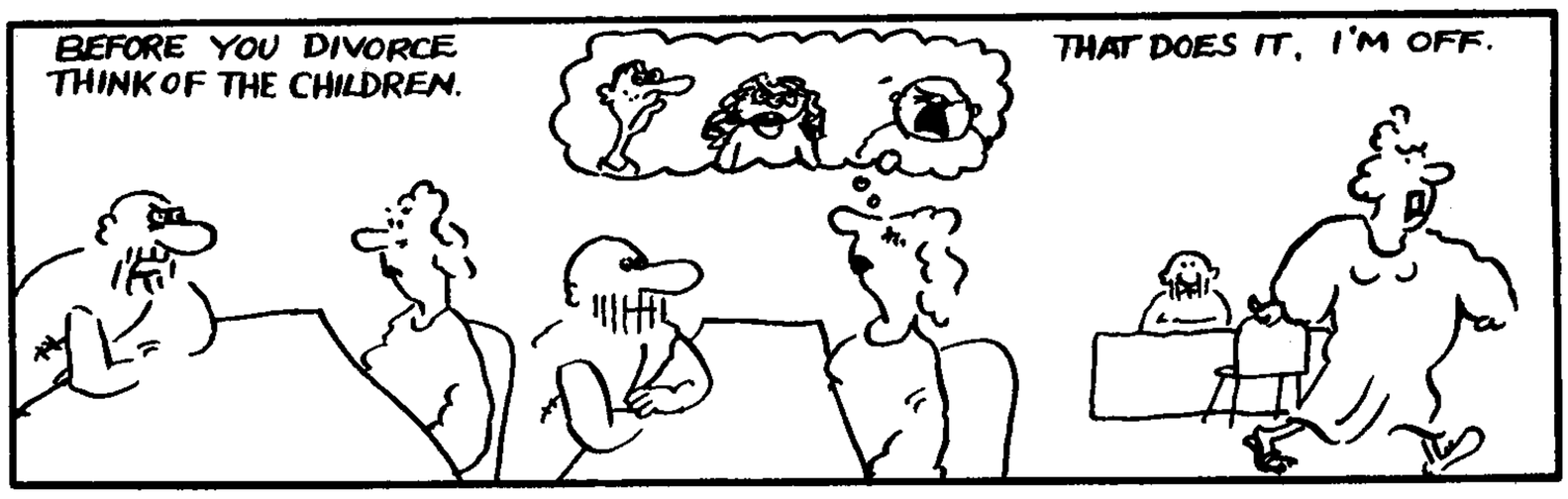
Malaysia's honest judges have been driven to despair. One issued a *samizdat* newsletter from his chambers cataloguing the corruption of his brethren: he was tracked down by police and forced, in secrecy, to resign.

There are more critics to be punished. The respected journalist M.G. Pillai has already been savaged by a $10m libel award. Murray Hiebert, a Canadian journalist working for the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, has been sentenced to prison for reporting the absurd lawsuit brought by the 16-year-old son of an appeal judge against his high school (for dropping him from the debating team). Next to be hit with libel damages (awarded by the judges — Malaysia has no juries) will be Tommy Thomas, outspoken secretary of the Bar Association, and Param Cumaraswamy, the distinguished local lawyer who is the UN rapporteur on the independence of the judiciary. Param is being sued for comments the UN says were covered by his diplomatic immunity. The Malaysia judges about whom they were made have decided otherwise and ordered his trial to go ahead.

What will chief justice Eusoff Chin do about all this?

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



FUNNY OLD WORLD

"When the committee first decided to erect a statue outside the fire station," said the Rev. Graham Capill, standing in Tokoroa's main square, "we invited several of our greatest local artists to submit designs, on the theme of firefighting. After some consideration, the committee chose a design by Malcolm Rewa, which showed a fireman in uniform holding a hose in his right hand. We paid him a total of $25,000 and asked him to cast it in bronze."

The Rev. Capill (leader of South Waikato's Christian Heritage party) then explained to reporters why he was now calling for the artist to be prosecuted. "Imagine our shock and distress when Mr Rewa unveiled his finished statue. It's nothing like the one

we commissioned. It made my wife vomit. For a start, he's stark naked, and instead of a hose, the man is holding his erect penis in his right hand and he appears to be preparing to engage in sexual dalliance with what looks like a sheep. Hardly the sort of image that the council wishes to promote, and especially not with public funds."

But Police Superintendent Peter Smith later told reporters that no legal action would be taken against the artist. "It's not a matter that warrants intervention" he said. "The statue was erected with the blessing of the community. It is a work of art, and we are a very broad-minded community. However, it will be destroyed." *(New Zealand News, 8/7/98. Spotter: Anon)*

—●—

● "Which brings me to the question of nose-picking on the Sabbath," Rabbi Ovadia Yosef told viewers during a sermon, relayed by satellite to his followers in Israel. "I am often asked about this subject, so today I shall give my definitive ruling on whether it is permitted to pick your nose on the day of rest."

The Iraq-born, ultra-Orthodox Yosef, who is widely considered to be a leading authority on Jewish law, was responding to questions sent in by viewers. "Some rabbis have argued that nose-picking is forbidden during the Sabbath, because tiny hairs inside the nostrils might be pulled out, along with the hardened bogey mucus. However, the scriptures only forbid us to cut our hair deliberately, and I can find no interdiction against accidentally pulling out individual hairs from the nasal passages. From this, I conclude that nose-picking is permitted, so long as it is done in moderation. But beware. If you do it to excess, it may be considered to be entertainment, or even self-abuse, and that is strictly forbidden on the Sabbath. Pick your noses by all means, but in moderation." *(The Gazette [Zimbabwe], 11/8/98. Spotter: Lee Wilson)*

—●—

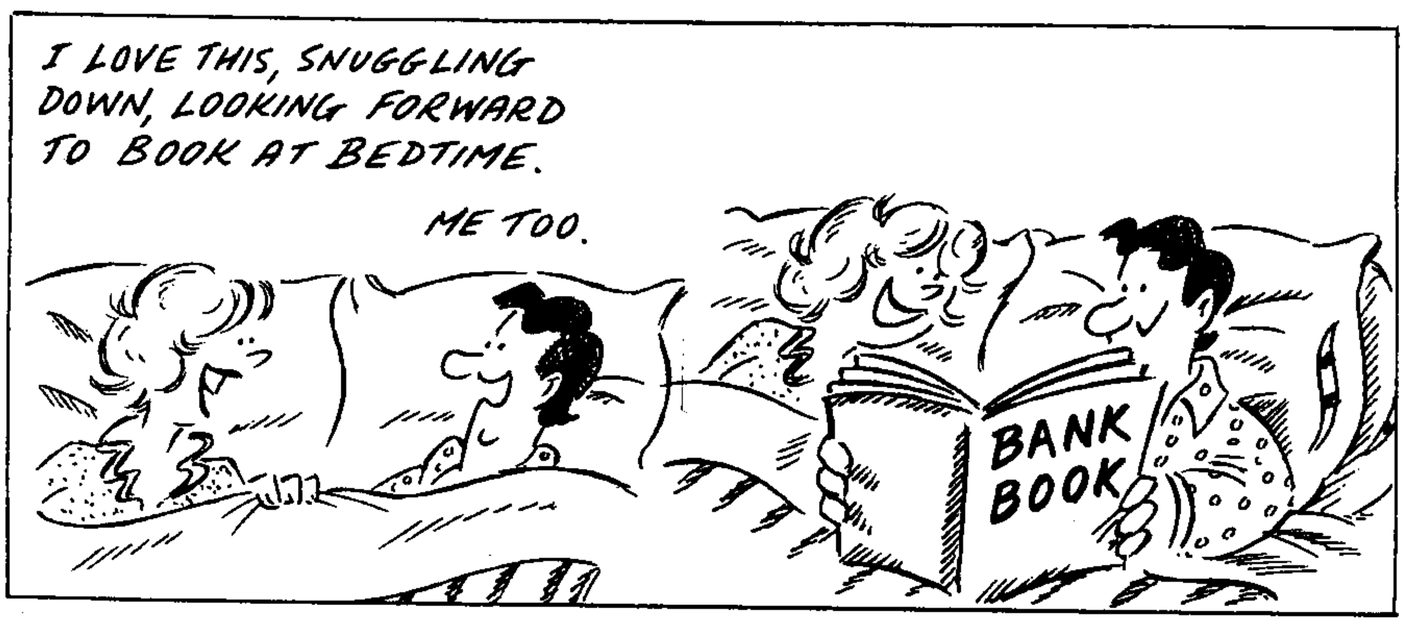
● *"It will be the wedding I always dreamed of," Janet Downes told listeners to a radio station in Omaha, Nebraska. "There will be a choir, a three-tier wedding cake, hundreds of flowers, and a beautiful white wedding gown. There'll only be one difference from a conventional wedding — no groom."*

Ms Downes, of Bellevue, Nebraska was announcing that on June 27th, her fortieth birthday, she intended to marry herself. "My analyst agrees that this is my very special way of celebrating the fact that I truly love myself. I've lived happily with myself for years, but now I want to make it official and tie the knot. I'll exchange wedding vows by standing in front of a mirror and repeating 'I, Janet Downes, do solemnly take myself, with all my strengths and faults...' Then I'll kiss myself." (Ottawa Citizen, 19/6/98. Spotter: Thomas Frisch)

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

The Lottery Winners

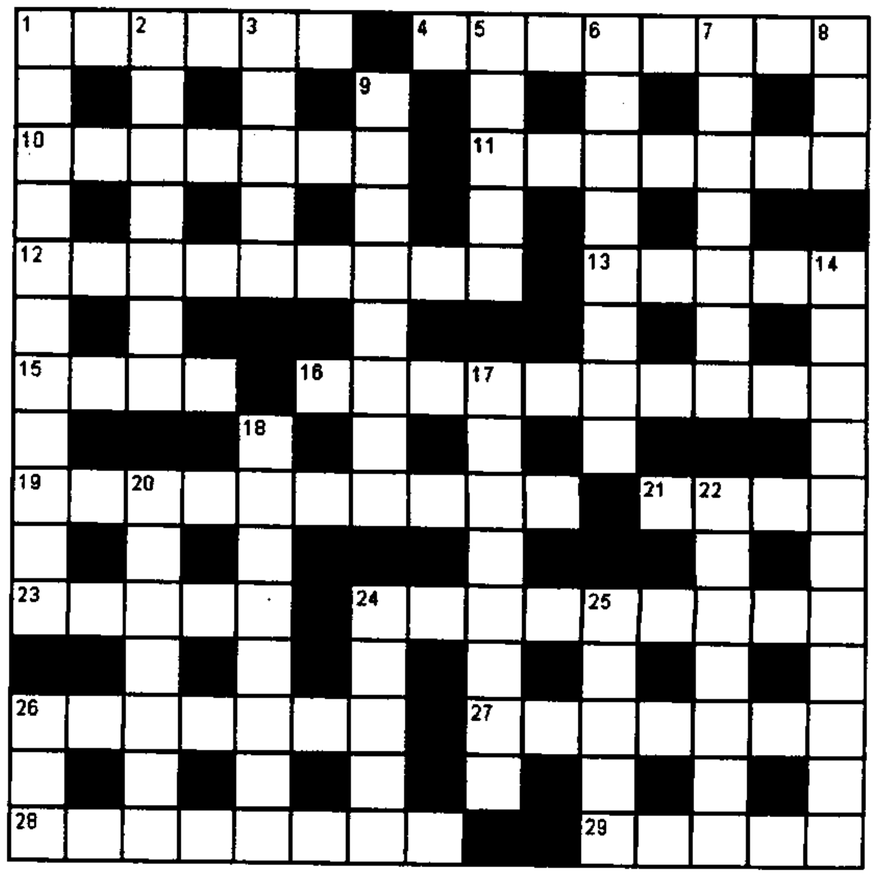
TURNER



EYE CROSSWORD 114

by Cyclops

£100 prize



ACROSS

1/4 Clinton's vice apparent in possible two-fingered salute to non-achievers according to our track report (6,8)
4 (see 1 ac.)
10 Owning a big corporation is an honour to one in the pen (7)
11 Stories about university with 55 effusive, back-slapping players (7)
12 Mrs. T, involved with AA(UK), gets a manual (4,5)
13 Put forward, Blair's number one is caught in lie (5)
15 Some heroin kept from the mouths of pigs (4)
16 Be ripped off by bastard lay journalist (3,7)
19 Anti-monarchists charge nuts (10)
21 Dewar's evidently concealing his true mouthpiece? (4)
23 Boycott is involved in fishy product (5)
24 Pain-in-the-arse Italian police point's means of eliminating bugs (9)
26 (see 7)
27 The Tories are no longer ripe now, sadly (2,5)
28 Tony's first to admit lobby is the preserve of local politics (4,4)
29 Lacking desire, yet hymen might be tied in a fragrant bouquet (5)

DOWN

1 Tabloid headline: "Mop taken to little brat!" (5,6)
2 Major types of minute energy conversion (4,3)
3 Ram shows interest in wobbling arse (5)
5 Small town dusky maidens' reported greeting? (5)
6 John, the 'soft rock' Conservative (8)
7/26 ac. The main means of protest scuppered by the French? (7,7)
8 A bit of a disaster, these undercover operators (3)
9 See it and agree it's a great organ to ogle (3,2,3)
14 Dirty Digger's after editor about Ecstasy ring to a point, Governor (5,6)
17 Cruelly humiliating, unhappy lives jerk creates (8)
18 One spoilt child, Brenda at heart – an apt description of most royals? (4,4)
20 Take the lid off United Nation's mob (7)
22 Public transport: complain abusively on street (7)
24 Risk being held by copper illegally (5)
25 Stick it in as a contribution to the intercourse? (5)
26 Howe totally encapsulates what Maggie despised (3)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 25.9.98. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 113

Winner: GINNY DAWES

ACROSS: 1 Knackered 6 Cupid 9 Eye-opener 10 Right 11 (see 16) 12 Oedipus Rex 14 The arts 15 Get laid 17 Antigua 19 Mooning 21 Deflowered 23 Porn 25 Puffy 26 Enteritis 27 Ochre 28 Stop press.
DOWN: 1 Knesset 2 (see 22) 3 Kept 4 Runners 5 Darling 6 Corruption 7 Pager 8 Detoxed 13 Troglodyte 16/11 A bit on the side 17 Add up to 18 A levels 19 Maestro 20 Genesis 22/2 Fifth Amendment 24 Crap.

HEATH DENIES '20-YEAR SULK'

by Our Political Staff **Simon Hefferlump**

SIR EDWARD Heath, the 89 year old former Prime Minister, yesterday denied claims that he had used his 736 page autobiography "solely to attack Mrs Thatcher".

"Rubbish," he told reporters, "I have also attacked John Major and William Hague — and, anyway, I am the last person to bear a grudge. In fact, I barely mention Mrs Thatcher in my book at all, which is much more concerned with my career as one of the world's greatest conductors, yachtsmen and signers of books."

THOSE MEMOIRS

Chapter One: How I Hate Mrs Thatcher

I SHALL never forget the day, ever, when I lost the Party leadership to that dreadful woman who stabbed me in the back after I had plucked her from obscurity and made her Minister of Paperclips. And how did she repay me? Bloody cow! She only goes and refuses to give me a job — just because I told her I wouldn't take a job from her even if she offered it to me on her bended knee!

TOMORROW: Chapter Two – How I Still Hate Mrs Thatcher.

That Clinton Prayer Breakfast In Full

Waffle with syrup

— ❋ —

Freshly squeezed tears

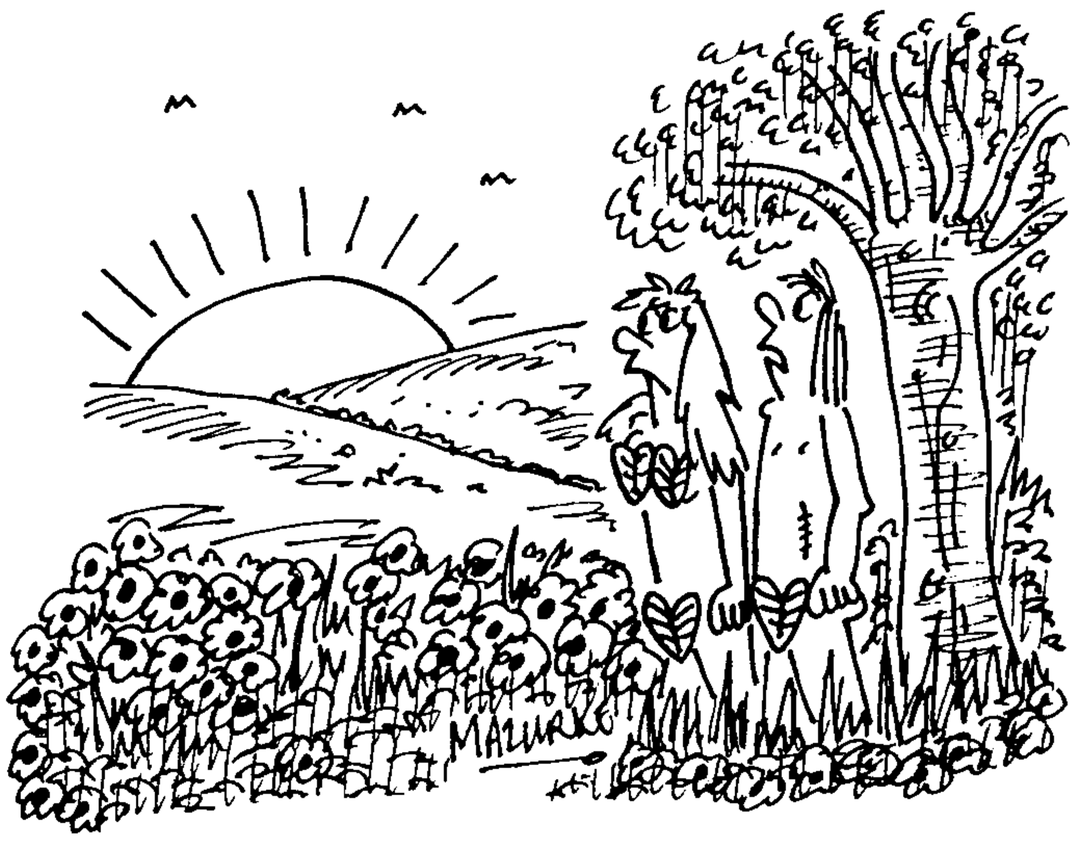
— ❋ —

Humble pie (off)

TV Highlights

C4 Cutting Edge: **Boycotting Rosie**

Fly-on-the-wall documentary looking at the editorial team at Cutting Edge and following them as they make a very boring documentary about a woman who used to have a job at a newspaper no one reads, but who left that newspaper to join another one. Wonderful moments include the one where the whole Cutting Edge staff are fired for putting on such thin stuff to fill up an hour on a Monday evening.



"One day, Eve, I'm going to take you away from all this"

GLENDA SLAGG

Fleet Street's Millennium Dame!

FOR Gawd's sake, Mr Starr, give our Bill a break!?! Yes, you, Mr Witch Finder General, with your holier-than-thou smirk and your 36 bible-bashin' boxes of bonkin' bollox!!! ('Scuse me, Mr Editor, but that's what it is!) You're starr-ting to be a pain in the neck! We know your type, a-creepin' and a-peepin' through the keyhole to watch poor old Bill and his buxom bimbo having a bit of fun!? Clear off back to the Starr-chamber (Geddit?!?!) and leave an innocent man to smoke his cigar in peace!!?

BILL CLINTON!! What a slimy, low down, two-timin' lyin' cheatin' two timer! If I was Hillary I'd shove his ten-cent cigar up his you-know-where?!?! And I'd advise the American people to do the same!!?!?! All together now: "Hit the Road, Bill, and doncha come back no more no more no more" *(That's enough "no mores". Ed.)*

MONICA Lewinsky!! What a Grade A Bitch!!!?? Don't play the innocent with me, little Miss Trailer Trash!?! Poor old Bill didn't know what hit him when Moanin' Monica came a-lustin' and a-bustin' into the Oval Office!??! Don't blame the President, Mr Media Men, blame the gal with the Thong at Twilight!! Geddit??!?

I SAY shed a tear for poor Monica Lewinsky!?!?! She was a small time gal from way out west who didn't stand a chance in the big bad city when wicked Willie came a-leerin' and a-smearin' into her lonesome little life!!?! Let's face it, gals, all fellas are the same!! They're bastards!!! And the sooner they resign the better for all of us!?!

Here they are, Glenda's All-Starr Bastards!?!?! (Shurely "Sex Bombs"? Ed.)

● AL GORE — He may be dull, he may love his wife, but I reckon he's Al man! Gore blimey!! (Geddit?!?)

● GORE VIDAL — He may be gay and over the hill, but he's still got one Vidal statistic I like the sound of! Gore Blimey!! *(You've done this. Ed.)*

● AMBROSE EVANS PRITCHARD — Crazy name, completely crazy guy!!

Byeeee!!

Advertisement

● MATELINE ♡

"I Found Happiness"

says Dr Margaret C. of Edinburgh

"FOR many months I had been alone with my word processor writing books and newspaper articles about what a bastard my former husband was. But now I have found true romance with a lovely man who has not got a silly beard and who is not knocking off his frumpy secretary behind my back." M.C.

You *too* can find the perfect partner with Mateline

We'll set you up with the ultimate romantic evening — candlelight, champagne and a photographer from the Daily Telegraph in the morning!

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

Well, isn't it tremendous that the football season is with us again!

From the park come the shouts of young boys — and girls! — enjoying one of God's greatest games.

"Man on!", "Chop him!", "Bring him down!" Don't all of us thrill to hear these young people learning the basic principles of teamwork, fair play and selflessness!

Look, that's what football is all about — particularly here at St Albion's, which is why we are grateful to my friend Mr Murdoch for agreeing to take over our local parish team.

I know that some of you feel that it is not appropriate for the owner of the Adult Vids and Mags Centre (as well as the St Albion Clarion and Albion FM!) to take over the football team as well.

Let me say that I shall listen very carefully, as I always do, to all these criticisms, before dismissing them.

In fact, I have asked Mr Mandelson to look into this proposal, and he is particularly well qualified to assess the pros and cons of it all, since he is a close personal friend of Mr Murdoch's daughter Liz.

And let's not forget either Mr Murdoch's very generous donation to our Millennium Tent Appeal. He has also offered to supply the material for the "Adult Zone", which will celebrate the human body by means of videos. Thanks, Rupert!

But, of course, this enormous act of generosity will in no way influence Mr Mandelson's view on the football team.

All of which brings me on to my second theme this week, which is my own popularity in the parish.

I am told that one of our house focus groups, under Mrs Dee Moss, has reported that I am no longer "top of the pops", and that in the last few weeks my popularity rating is no higher than

that of my predecessor, the Rev. Major.

Let me tell you this. You don't get anywhere in this life by listening to focus groups and trying to be popular!

Let's not forget that Our Lord himself would have not scored very highly on any popularity poll!

I think you'll recall that a certain Mr Barabbas won the approval of the multitude when they called for a show of hands!

The important thing surely is to do what you believe in, not what you think will please people!

That way you will be far more popular in the end, which is what really counts!

Why don't we all think about that every night before we go to bed, and then write to Mrs Moss telling her what we think about her silly focus group!

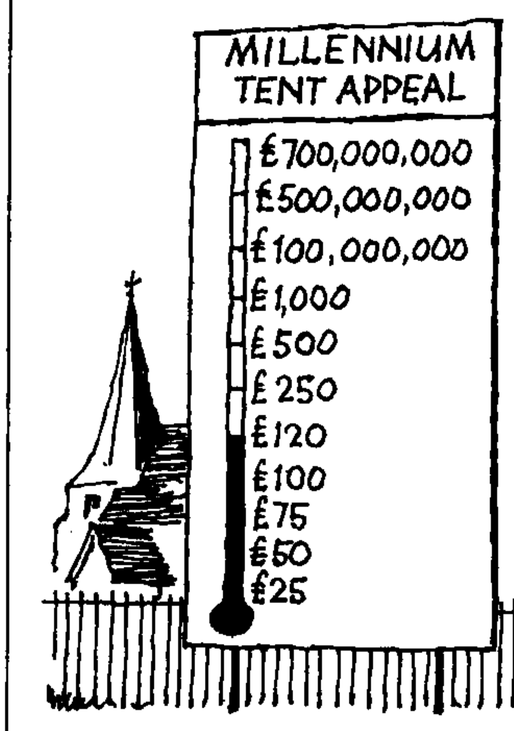
Your friend,

Tony

MORE TEA, VICAR?
Tony shows his support for the Reverend William Jefferson Clinton of the Church of The Seven Day Fornicators. Says Tony, "Bill tells me that he truly repents of his sins and denies that he has committed any sins in the first place. He also tells me that he is very keen to try the Third Way, as he has never done it like that before!"

THE MILLENNIUM TENT APPEAL

Local artist Brian Bagnall shows us how it's going!



Well on the way to the target! T.B.

You Write...

From Mr Benn,

Dear Sir,

I would like to protest at the way we were all called back from our holidays for the Extraordinary General Meeting of the PCC, only so that we could rubber stamp a series of decisions already made by the Vicar. There was a time when

Yours faithfully,
T. Benn, Scargill Villas.

■ The editor Mr Campbell reserves the right to cut any letters for reasons of space.

Our Thanks...

...to Mr Jenkins for all the work he has put into his paper on new voting procedures for the PCC and other parish elections. Copies of his 398 page report are available from the Vestry (price £25). But for those who have not got time to read all his excellent recommendations in detail, he has provided a helpful summary personally dictated by Roy to Mr Campbell from his room in the St Albion's Sunset Home For Retired Gentlefolk:

- What I would wecommend most stwongly is that we intwoduce a system of single transfewwable voting (or AMG). Under this, each elector has one vote, which can be twansferred whensoever it may be appwopwiate and added to the votes cast for the vicar or his fwiends, until such time as he secures an overwhelming pwoportion of the total vote. W.J

Thank you, Roy, and a case of your favourite "claret" is winging its way to you to show our appreciation for all your good work. T.B.

To Remember In Your Prayers

Mr Cook, who, rather than attend the important oecumenical conference in Austria, chose instead to go on holiday with his new wife. Let us hope Robin had a good rest, and that he will eventually come to see how self-indulgent and irresponsible it was of him to put swanning about like a lovesick teenager above his parish duties. T.B.

PARISH OUTING — Change of Venue

Please note that, at the insistence of Mr Prescott, this year's outing will be to Blackpool after all. I know some of us will be less than thrilled at the thought of all those smelly fish and chips and dirty old trams. But, as John rightly says, it is important to show that we are in touch with ordinary folk! T.B.

PS. Would any businessmen like to sponsor the outing? You will get to sit next to Tony at the very front of the bus!

P.M.

STORM GROWS OVER MURDOCH BID FOR 'SUPER-REDS'

by Our Media Staff **Jimmy Overthehill**

MR RUPERT Murdoch, the media magnate, and owner of the satellite TV organisation BSkyB, today provoked a huge row when it was revealed that he had bought up Britain's top political team, known to their millions of fans as "the Super-Reds".

Murdoch, it emerged, has for months been engaged in secret negotiations to bring about one of the most sensational political coups of the century.

Red Card

Under the deal, New Labour United will be given the full support of Murdoch's multi-media empire, so long as they do exactly what he tells them.

Such superstars as striker Tony Blair and right-winger Gordon Brown will only in future be allowed to appear on Sky TV or in the Sun newspaper.

Foot Balls-Up

Murdoch's huge investment is regarded by City analysts as a triumph for manager Peter Mandelson's legendary team, after years of being dubbed second-best no-hopers.

The nadir of the club's fortunes was in the 1980s, when under veteran manager Mike Foot they failed to win a single match, as their old rivals the Blues carried all before them.

One by one their star players left. Roy Jenkins went off to play in Europe (for Bordeaux Non-Athletico), while boy-wonder Owen was recruited to play in the former Yugoslavia where he scored a record number of own-goals for Serbia.

Tone Goal

But then in the 1990s it all began to change. With the arrival of the greatest right-of-centre forward of his generation, Tony Blair, the team developed its exciting new "Third Way" strategy which carried the club to the top of the championship.

They became the most popular team in Britain, after smashing the Blues out of sight in the 1997 final, by the record score of 413 to 165.

MU-rdoch

It is no wonder that the ruthless tycoon Rupert Murdoch soon set his sights on adding the Labour Party to his worldwide portfolio of investments.

Said a delighted Tony Blair last night, "This is great news for our team, for politics and for the people of Britain."

On Other Pages

Blair Bubble Bursts — Poll shows 84 percent say "PM is untrustworthy, incompetent and a friend of Rupert Murdoch."

UNIONISTS REFUSE TO GIVE UP HANDS

by Our Ulster Correspondent **Lunchtime O'Range**

UNIONIST leader David Trimble yesterday announced that his party were refusing to surrender their hands, even if it resulted in the slowing down of the peace process.

Said a Unionist spokesman: "As long as the IRA continue to keep their arms hidden away, then we will pursue the policy of keeping our hands to ourselves."

He continued: "There is nowhere in the Good Friday agreement which says we have to hand over our hands to the Sinn Fein leadership. We will appoint someone who will negotiate the shaking of hands soon enough, but we must stress now, that to rush this process would be foolhardy, and could result in loss of life (*surely "face"? Ed.*).

LATE NEWS

Demos calls for slimmed-down Monarchy

The influential think tank Demos has advocated cutting down the powers of the Monarch, His Majesty Tony Blair, and his unelected band of courtiers who are both expensive and undemocratic and *(cont. p. 94)*

GOBLIN upright lover, excellent condition, £45.

Hemel Hempstead Herald & Express

"It's from the University of Life... You didn't get in"

OPERA HOUSE TO BE SAVED

by Our Music Staff **Val Kiri Te Kanawa**

THE Royal Opera House has come up with a radical new plan to save itself from bankruptcy.

Said a spokesman, "We have decided to put on no operas at all, thereby saving huge sums of money in terms of singers, musicians and technical staff."

He continued, "Opera is a notoriously expensive art form and it makes real financial sense not to stage any."

Closi Fan Tutti

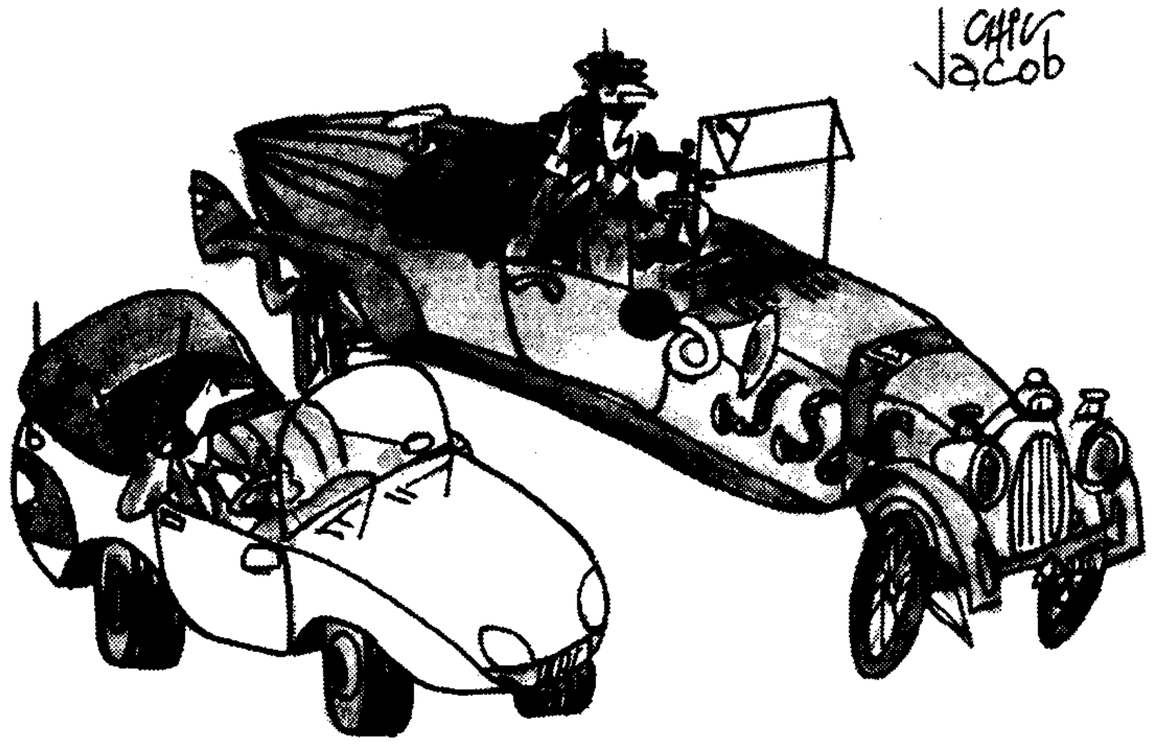
He concluded, "We have been accused in the past of elitism, but this plan is genuinely egalitarian — now no one will get to see any opera."

School Announcements

St Cakes

Meltdown Term begins today. There are only seven boys in the school, due to the unforeseen collapse of the Malaysian, Indonesian, Thai, Hong Kong and Russian economies. P.M.W. Footsie (Hundred's) is Head of Derivatives. Hang Seng (Index's) is Keeper of the Bear Market. D.O.W. Jones (Salomon's) is Captain of the Wall Street Game. Owing to financial difficulties there are no staff this year. The Rev. P.D. O'Phile (Chaplain 1983-94) has been released back into the community and returns as Director of Internet Studies of the Lower School. The new Detoxification Wing (formerly the School Library) will be opened by Miss Paula Yates (OC) and her current partner (TBA). There will be a performance of Sir Harrison Birtwistle's *Panic* by the School Orchestra at "Last Night Of The Cakes" on 5 November (tickets from the Bursar, Brigadier K.G.B. Zhirinovsky at Dunyeltsin, College Road). Suicides will be on 10 December.

Frefhers' week circa 1650



Daily Mail, Friday, September 18, 1998

Why Should An Accident Of Birth Decide Who Gets The Most Important Job In Britain?

asks Prince William

A YOUNG man steps from the shadows to take on the greatest responsibility that any human being can ever be asked to shoulder.

At the age of only 35, Jonathan de Vere Bubblesworth Rothermere finds himself propelled from his obscure role as assistant advertising manager of the Evening Standard to the throne of Middle England.

And for why? Has he passed the requisite number of GCSEs? Has he contributed any award-winning scoops to the Mail on Sunday concerning the private life of Miss Anthea Turner?

Has he won the support of millions of readers of the Daily Mail in a democratically constituted plebiscite?

Mail Heir

The sad answer is no. No doubt Mr Bubblesworth is a charming young man and an amiable dinner companion.

But we are today living in the 1990s. It is the age of the Internet, the mobile phone and the pop-up toaster.

Surely we expect the holders of high office to be dedicated professionals, not just privileged young aristocrats who waltz into the top positions in the land simply because of who their parents were.

The Daily Mail is a great and revered national institution.

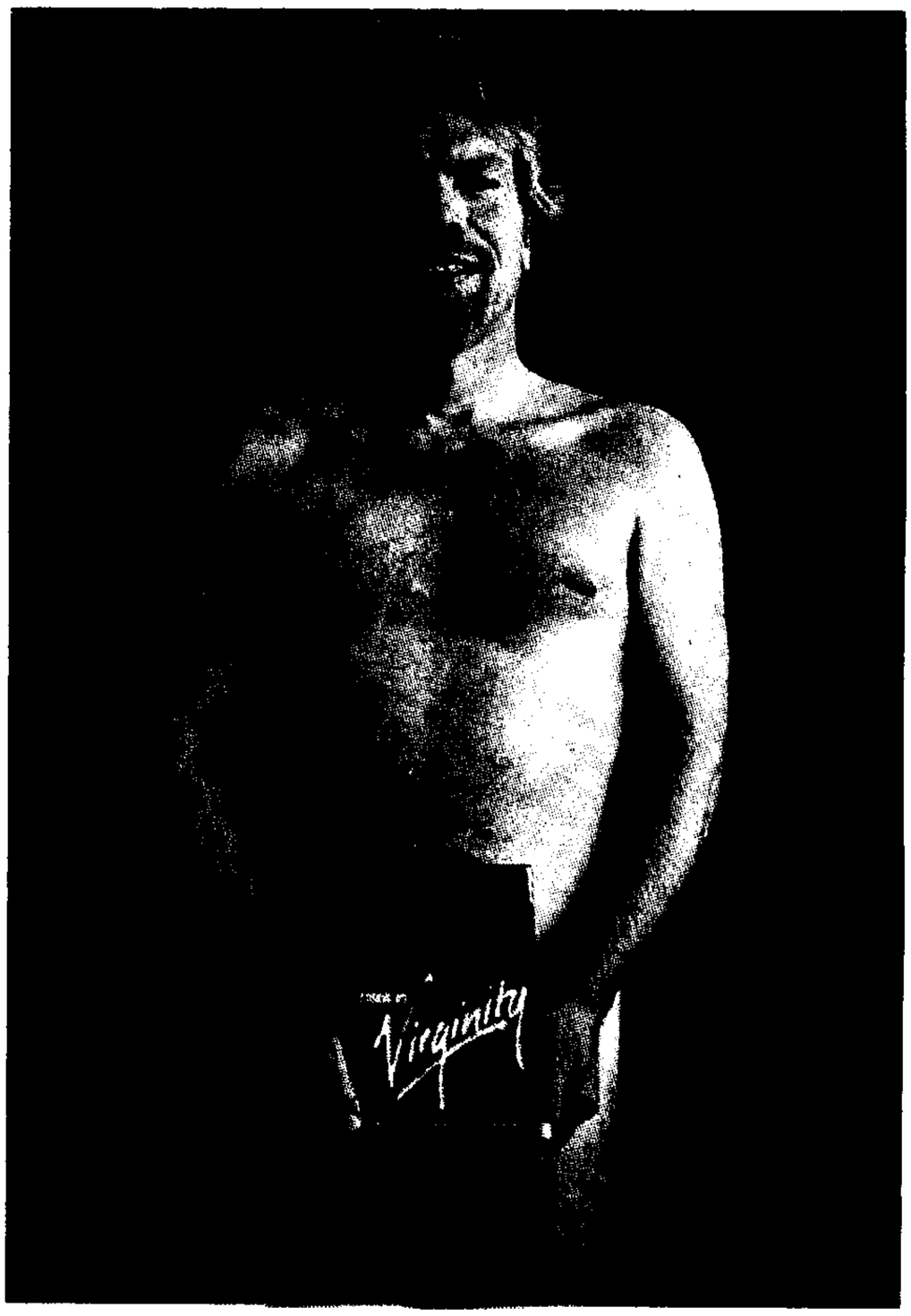
But if it is to survive, it must adapt and change.

The principle of merit must take precedence over the outmoded system of hereditary succession.

Surely in a truly meritocratic society, the ownership of the Daily Mail should not just pass automatically to some effete sprig of an ancient dynasty, but to a thrusting, brilliant man of today such as myself.

EMPEROR TO LAUNCH NEW CLOTHES RANGE

by Our Fairy Tale Staff **Will Self-Publicist**



THE EMPEROR of Business today revealed his fabulous new range of high-quality clothing. The fashion market is a new departure for the multi-talented Emperor who has so far turned to gold all that he has touched.

Says the Emperor, "This suit I am wearing is certain to catch on. It is woven of the finest thread and cut in the latest style. Everyone will be flocking to my shops."

However, one onlooker, a small boy in the crowd, pointed out that the Emperor was entirely naked and that his clothes were on a par with his trains, ie they were non-existent.

HUSBAND

FOOD SCARE — LATEST

by **Old Trevor Macdonald**

THE PUBLIC are being advised by the government not to swallow any more food scares, as they may end up feeling anxious and depressed.

The food scares can be found in most newspapers and contain large quantities of BSE, CJD, E-Coli or Crohn's Disease. In severe cases, the consumption of excess food scares can lead to hysteria, madness and the end of agriculture. *(Reuters)*

THE TIMES TODAY FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18 1998

NEWS

Man U Fans Applaud BSkyB Takeover

■ "Mr Murdoch's bold move has delighted Old Trafford fans" writes Raymond Noddy ..... **Page 6**

SPORT

Football will be the real winner as BSkyB kicks off the new Golden Age of English Soccer .....**Page 29**

COLUMNS

SIMON JENKINS

"Though no lover of football, I take my hat off to Mr Rupert Murdoch for his daring initiative" .....**Page 22**

MATTHEW PARRIS

"Knee-jerk anti-Murdochism is the curse of the age. I say three cheers for my boss" ..... **Page 22**

Delighted Manchester supporters line streets to welcome their new Chairman

BUSINESS

ANALYSIS

Manchester United shares soar on news of BSkyB bid .....**Page 40**

LETTERS

Abolition of News at Ten; rare butterfly seen in Dorset; no protest at Murdoch takeover of football club ....**Page 27**

THE PAPERS

"GOTCHA – SUPER RUPE DOES IT AGAIN!"

– The Sun

"ATTABOY RUPES – SOCCER IT TO THEM!"

– New York Daily Post

"POMMIE BASTARDS ROLLED OVER BY OUR PROPRIETOR"

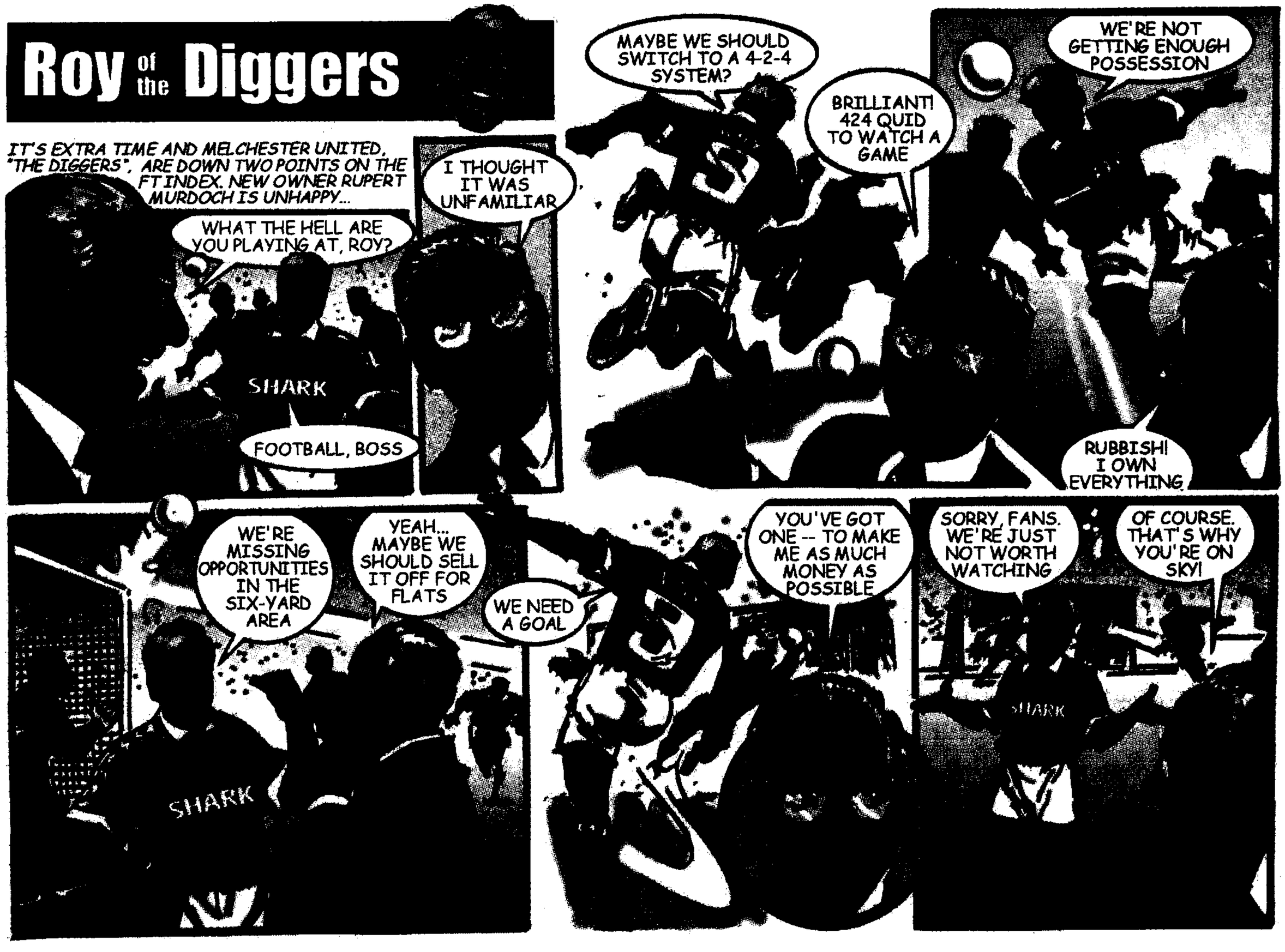
– The Daily Billabong & New Queensland Enquirer

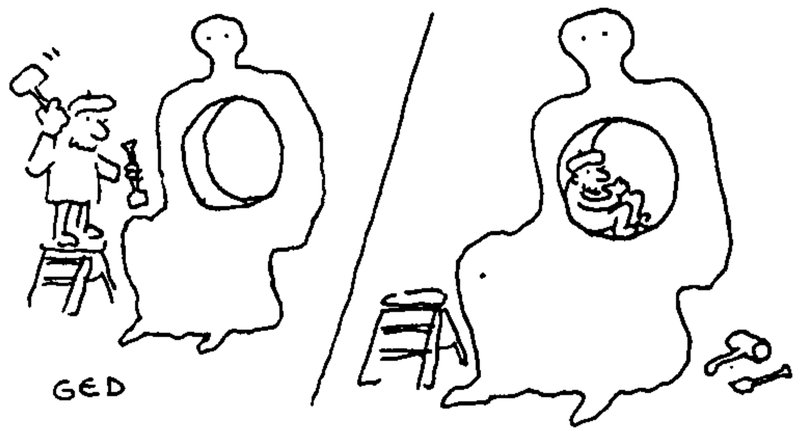
BOOKS

Peter Stothard looks at a life of Virgil and wonders if the Roman poet foresaw the brilliant takeover of Man Utd by Rupert Murdoch .....**Page 36**

OBITUARY

Manchester United .....**Page 94**


Roy of the Diggers
IT'S EXTRA TIME AND MELCHESTER UNITED, "THE DIGGERS", ARE DOWN TWO POINTS ON THE FT INDEX. NEW OWNER RUPERT MURDOCH IS UNHAPPY...
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU PLAYING AT, ROY?
I THOUGHT IT WAS UNFAMILIAR
SHARK
FOOTBALL, BOSS
MAYBE WE SHOULD SWITCH TO A 4-2-4 SYSTEM?
BRILLIANT! 424 QUID TO WATCH A GAME
WE'RE NOT GETTING ENOUGH POSSESSION
RUBBISH! I OWN EVERYTHING
WE'RE MISSING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SIX-YARD AREA
YEAH... MAYBE WE SHOULD SELL IT OFF FOR FLATS
WE NEED A GOAL
SHARK
YOU'VE GOT ONE -- TO MAKE ME AS MUCH MONEY AS POSSIBLE
SORRY, FANS. WE'RE JUST NOT WORTH WATCHING
OF COURSE. THAT'S WHY YOU'RE ON SKY!
SHARK



THE TIMES FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18 1998

Why Clinton Must Go

by William Rees-Mogg

MISS MONICA Lewinsky is just a side show in the grand drama that is now unfolding on the banks of the Potomac.

That the President is an adulterer and a liar is serious but not critical. After all, this has been true of every President I have known personally over the past 50 years.

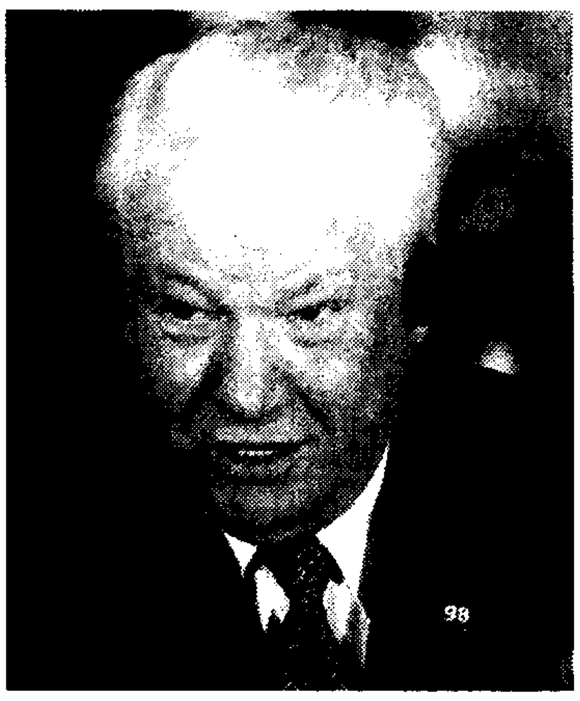
No, what will force the resignation of President Jefferson Clintesterone will be the fact that he is a serial mass-murderer and for the past 20 years has been simply the front man for one of the biggest Mafia-controlled drug-laundering operations in the Western world, run by notorious Arkansas hoodlums such as Charlie "the Coyote" Horsebox Whittington-Smythe and others of his ilk.

His wife Hilary Roddam Clintoris, I am told on very good authority, was for many years a "hooker" in one of the leading "establishments" in downtown Little Rock.

The two of them also had a lucrative sideline in running guns to the IRA.

I know all this because some chap told me all about it in the gents at the Garrick. I am sure he knew what he was talking about, because his father was at Charterhouse with me in the 1920s.

© Lord Really-Smugg



I represent democracy in Russia...

... which is why I will do everything possible...

... to stay in supreme power...

... in defiance of the will of the people.

"WHY I HATE THE PRESS"

MEL FAT talks exclusively to all newspapers

"HOW dare you interview me?"

Mel Fat is not pleased at my first question, "Mr Fat, why are you so marvellous?"

"Do you know how important I am?" he shouts. "I am the director of the greatest film ever made, *Mr Bore*. I've made huge amounts of money."

At first sight Mel Fat appears a deeply unpleasant man. But at second sight he does as well.

"God, I hate the British press," he tells me, lighting a cigar. "They don't understand my genius. They think I'm just some TV comic because I invite them round to plug my new TV comedy series. The fact is that I'm the world's greatest director — why can't you miserable jealous journos acknowledge this? Now get out."

Mel Fat stars in the *Fat and Thin Show* with Gryff Rhys-Thin starting on BBC One on Wednesday.

BBC NEWS

M. Buerk: ...and now, for the latest on the great Russian crisis, we go over to Our Chief Global Affairs Editor John Simpson in Moscow.

(Cut to smug looking man in grey overcoat, sitting in front of picture of Kremlin)

Buerk: John, it seems things are looking black for Russia tonight?

Simpson: Yes, Michael, I think the best way to sum up the situation here in Russia tonight is that it is looking pretty black. I was speaking earlier today to one of the most influential members of the Duma, Alexander Middleoftheroadski, leader of the hardline Liberal Social Democratic Nationalist party.

(Film of Simpson nodding earnestly as man in suit drones on)

Russian: I think situation here in Moskva is best described in one old Russian phrase: is looking pretty black.

Simpson: There you have it. The situation has now reached a point which almost all commentators are describing as "pretty black". This is John Simpson, about to go off and write a long piece for the Sunday Telegraph, in Moscow.

Buerk: Thank you, John. And now, back to our main story of the evening, Viagra, does it cause BSE?

A = Adult; CHD = one child under 15 sharing with two adults.
Please note: Park View rooms do not overlook park. *Qantas brochure*

Mr David Jenkins, former librarian, National Library of Wales, 82; Mr Ukyo Katayama, racing driver, check alive 31;

The council is currently implementing a 10-year cemeteries development programme to make Peterborough's graveyards more user-friendly. *Peterborough Citizen*

Daily Mail

COMMENT

A Year On — Was It Just A Case Of Mass Hysteria?

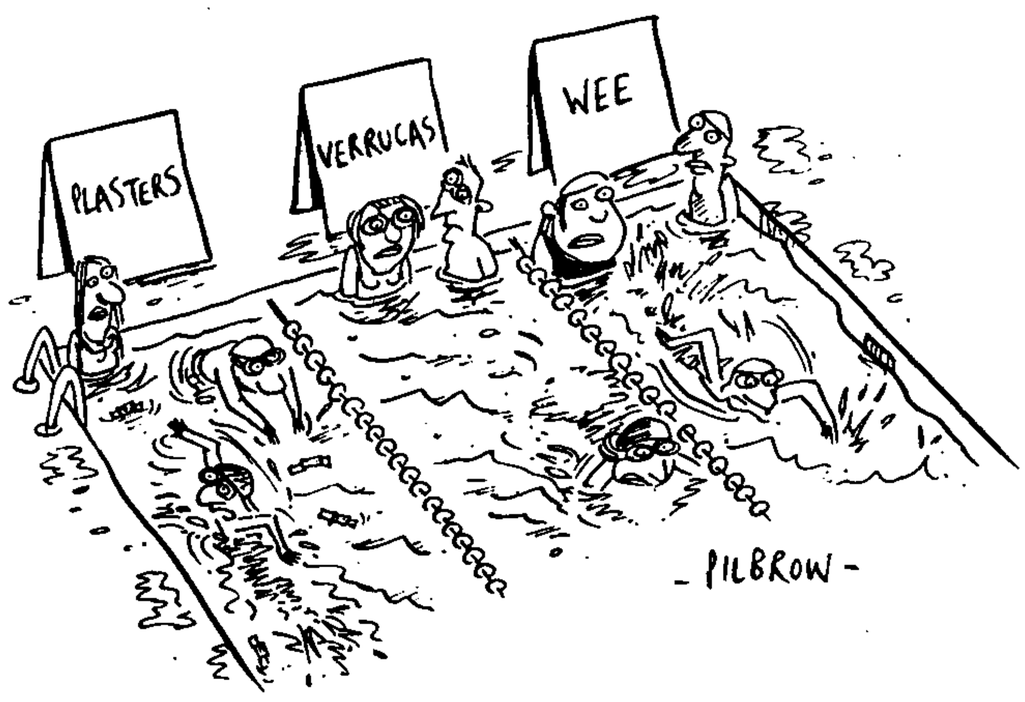
asks Lynda Lee-Slagg, A.N. Wislon, John Mortiboys, etc, etc

WAS IT all a dream? Did we all take leave of our senses? Did the media whip us up into a state of misplaced emotional frenzy which bore no relation to reality?

Just over a year later, it is difficult to believe that we were all so uncritical. That we were prepared to elevate to semi-divine status an ordinary flawed human being whose compassionate smile often disguised the manipulative and ruthless personality beneath.

It is time to get on with our lives. We must stop going on about Tony Blair as if he was some sort of saint. In fact *(cont'd. p. 94)*

Public Swimming Pool Lanes



That BSkyB Manchester United Line-Up In Full

Bobby Charlton (1968, Black and White)
Bobby Charlton (Repeat)
George Best (1969 Colour)
Bobby Charlton (Repeat)
George Best (Repeat)
Chuck Dorfman (1998 Made for TV American Import)
Bobby Charlton (Repeat)
George Best (Repeat)
Kevin Cheapo (1998, UK Premiere)

PLUS Another chance to see George Best & Bobby Charlton

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam: Lines Written On The Death Of Japanese Cinematic Giant Akira Kurosawa

Ah so. Farewell then
Akira Kurosawa.
Or should I say
Sayonara?

You were the director of
The Magnificent Seven
Samurai,
Which was a brilliant
Film

Starring Yul Brynner,
Steve McQueen,
Charles Bronson and Eli
Wallach.

Da, da, da, da
Da-da-da-da-da.

That was your
Theme tune.

Although it is hard to
Convey it
In a poem.

E.J. Thribb (Magnificent 17½)

Great Bores Of Today. Drawn by Michael Heath

"So dyou wanna meet me there or dyou wanna meet round your place an go there tell you wot you ring Phil tell im to meet me at my place then we can meet you there or maybe we could meet round your place an go there or why don't you meet Phil round your place an then come round my place an then we all go there... you still there... or maybe I'll got there an meet you an Phil why don't I ring Phil an say we'll meet im at is place an then go there or maybe you me an Phil should meet there say eight no make it seven thirty ok eight so I'll meet you an Phil there at eight so will you ring Phil or shall I ring Phil you ring Phil... hello? hello? you're breaking up... I said you ring Phil an tell im you an me'll meet im there definite at eight or dyou wanna meet round your place at seven thirty an go there at eight tell you wot I'll ring Phil tell im to meet at my place at seven thirty then we can meet round your place you there at eight or dyou wanna meet someplace else tell you wot you ring Phil an ask im where he wants to meet then you ring me back actually thinkin about it I'm not sure I can make it maybe another night see ya..."

DIARY

RICHARD BRANSON

I was looking into a void. In all my life, I had never been so terrified. I knew at that moment that my future was in his hands. Would he make it? I watched his left hand stretch out. I held my breath.

No! He hadn't got there!

We didn't have long. Time was fast running out. I gasped inwardly as he changed hands and tried again. I knew then that this was our last chance. Slowly, slowly, his hand stretched towards its target. He faltered, and seemed about to collapse. Oh, my God! But then from somewhere he found one last burst of energy — and somehow he got there. Yes! He had made it! Keith Richard had managed to sign our multi-million pound 5-year contract!

Virgin was home and dry!

Cool it, guys, just cool it! It's now over a year since her death. It's time we moved on. That's what she would have wanted. So let's just ease it a bit, right?

This was the message I developed to the Queen and Prince Philip when I schlepped round to Buck P. for lunch two days ago. It was an informal lunch — thank God!! — so I didn't have to wear a tie or anything (yup, it's true, I really hate wearing ties — but that's just the kinda smart-casual guy I am! You won't catch me conforming — no way!). But I could tell just by the way they dressed and spoke that the Queen and Prince Philip were feeling a bit uptight. So I gave them a great big smile and some free advice.

I touched on many issues. Like how they should update the National Anthem. Did they know Phil Collins's great "Something in the Air Tonight"? Great song, great anthem — and sadly underused. And like how they should get a bit more contemporary in their dress-sense. "You'd look great in a pair of Virgin denims, ma'am," I said. "I'll get them sent round tomorrow, 40% discount." I then sat back and drew out a business plan for the Royals, peppered with the Virgin philosophy. Live for the present. Best foot forward. Swing low, sweet chariot. Buy low, sell high. You've gotta live life to the full. Every cloud has a silver lining. Pile 'em high, sell 'em cheap. A smile never hurt anyone. Every little helps. Tomorrow is the first day of the rest of your life. Love means never having to say you're sorry. Never mind the quality, feel the width...

When I'd finished, the head butler came over to my chair. He was wearing a tie. "Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh send their apologies, sir, but they were called away twenty minutes ago. Did you bring a coat, sir?"

Virgin Update... Virgin Update... Virgin Update... Following hot on the heels of our highly successful Virgin Rail division, next month sees the launch of our long-awaited Virgin Nuclear Fuels. For too long, the whole Nuclear Fuels thing in this country has been sadly lacking in one essential ingredient — FUN. So, we've decided to take our nuclear clients (yes, that's you, folks!) kicking and screaming into the 21st century with a totally new, wicked and updated service, including:

- Giant Smiley Faces on every Virgin Nuclear Reactor.
- Chris Evans lookalikes to supervise all onsite cooling processes.
- Two free tickets (back stalls and balcony only, all subject to availability) to The Rolling Stones World Tour 2002 for every client contracting leukaemia or any related disease.
- Virgin Cola brewed under licence on premises for added fizz.

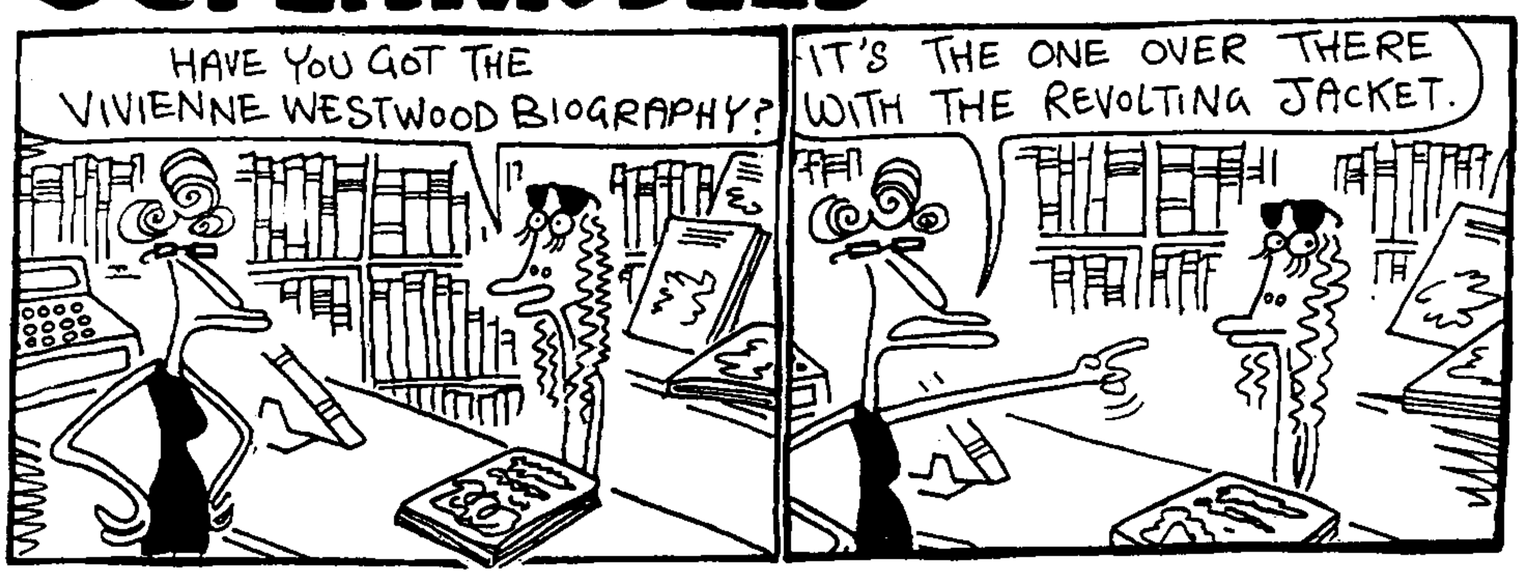
And, yes, to achieve some great publicity for what we believe to be a world-class product, I myself will be dropping the essential red-hot components of each Reactor onto the Virgin Nuclear Sites from my world-famous Virgin Challenger Hot Air Balloon. Yes, with your help, we at Virgin fully intend to make it a boom time for the nuclear industry! Great!

I've always gone into business not to make money, but because I think I can do things better than they've been done before — and because I truly believe the public deserve the very best, at the lowest price possible. Take Virgin Cola — until I introduced it onto the market, the public had never had the chance to buy fizzy black cola before. We had a truly memorable launch. I wore nothing but a pair of Y-fronts, then they painted me in the reds and blacks of the Virgin Cola label — making me look just like an exact replica Virgin Cola bottle. At the appointed time, one of our splendid Virgin team put her hands on my beaming head, just like it was a bottle-top, and then proceeded to unscrew it. She then pulled my head right off and — whaddya know?! — out popped lots of bubbly sweet stuff! Another truly brilliant launch — and two per cent of the first day's take went to designated Virgin charities. Great!

Virgin Update... Virgin Update... Virgin Update... Next January sees the launch of Virgin Penitentiaries, our very own, cutting-edge contribution to Jack Straw's exciting new plans for taking the privatisation of the prison service into the 21st century. Every Virgin cell will be provided with its own special Virgin headset, with Mike Oldfield's classic Tubular Bells 11 playing 24 hours a day. And that's just the punishment block. Elsewhere, the VGLDs (that's Virgin Gold Lifetime Detainees to you!) will be able to while away their days with in-cell entertainment of an 18-hour loop-tape of classic Chris Evans banter, updated on an annual basis. Great for Virgin — and great for the country! Be there!

SUPERMODELS

KERBER



There had been rumours of a semen-stained dress six months earlier, but these were dismissed as figments of journalists' fevered imaginations. By the time Clinton realised that the dress existed, it was too late.

The White House lawyers could not help worrying what else would leak out.

Sunday Times

Literary Review

Ripping yarns?

Happy Like Murderers
Gordon Burn
(Faber, £20)

LITERATURE has never much gone in for nicknames. Ian McEwan was briefly known as Ian McAbre, on grounds of subject matter; but otherwise it's mainly been matey abbreviations so that Sir William Golding, for example, was known as Bill. Two contemporary authors, though, have developed nicknames and, oddly, it's the same one.

Both Blake Morrison and Gordon Burn are referred to by their contemporaries as "Ripper". Both, it so happens, have been inspired to literature by the murderer Peter Sutcliffe. Morrison wrote a poem "The Ballad Of The Yorkshire Ripper" and Burn a psychological biography of Sutcliffe called *Somebody's Husband, Somebody's Son*. But the nickname has stuck for other reasons too. Both writers share a certain northern intensity (Burn even has the "Geordie accent" for which the police hunting Sutcliffe were so notoriously looking) and a tendency to be drawn towards subject-matter which other writers would find too sleazy or creepy.

Ripper Morrison did the killers of Jamie Bulger in *As If*. It's not known whether he's currently writing *The Ballad Of Fred And Rose*, but Ripper Burn has already got in there with *Happy Like Murderers*, an account of the murders and other perversions at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, based on police interview transcripts, Rose's trial evidence and interviews with Rose's mum, here speaking for the first time.

Authors of intendedly serious books about sociopaths tend to be judged — as Gita Sereny just discovered with her Mary Bell volume — on two moral questions: How did they get the information? How do they present it? Sereny was largely exonerated by the critical court on the second question but convicted on the first: she had paid money to a convicted criminal, a transaction now widely considered abhorrent under a social protocol inspired by the rules of newspapers.

Ripper Burn insists he has paid no money to any source and therefore is only vulnerable on financial morality over the question of his own earnings from the work. In this respect, he is no more culpable than the numerous newscasters who introduced the latest revelations from Cromwell Street night after night.

Burn is, though, in trouble on the question of presentation and selection of material. He is a promising novelist — the best Amis-imitator in town — but the difficulty arises in the literary model he has chosen for his crime books: Norman Mailer. Mailer, an old pro, was cunning enough to choose as the subject for his musings on murder as an existential act relatively small-scale killers. Even so, there were some who were revulsed by the level of his identification with Garry Gilmore and Jack Henry Abbot.

Burn, though, is taking on two serial killers, each with several side perversions as well. Do we really need to know precisely what Fred did with Rose's semen-stained knickers or exactly where his video camera went when he "examined" her after sex? Or (and some will find these pages impossible to read) the precise manner in which he raped his children?

And when the prose, in best Mailer pastiche, starts putting the writer inside the head of the protagonists ("Charmaine was in the back and he was in the front and he turned round in the driver's seat and held her by the throat until...") the reader really doesn't want to be that close to the action.

And, crucially, the reader wonders why the author wants to be there. Burn and Morrison like to encourage the impression that they are the blue berets in the anarchic territory of real life crime writing. Both refer darkly to "the kind of people who usually write this kind of thing" (they mean Brian Masters) and thus imply that they are trying to make the genre honest. But how can Burn be so sure that his own motives are pure? What kind of writer is it who makes sociopaths his special subject, who does both Sutcliffe and the Wests? Analyst, analyse thyself.

Burn's claims to high, quasi-anthropological seriousness are also rather undermined by the dustjacket. The cover is a Damien Hirst original which shows a smiley badge embedded in earth. This post-modern larkiness — particularly when combined with the snappily come-on title *Happy Like Murderers* — does not seem notably superior in moral judgement to the "instant" books and tabloid pull-outs from which Burn so carefully distances himself.

'Book Eyes'

What You Didn't Miss Part 94

Charlotte Gray by Sebastian Faulks

CANNERLEY took her to the Ritz.

"I hope you don't think it's too corny," he said as they stepped into the bar, "but we *are* characters in a novel about the Second World War, and frankly I don't see why Mary Wesley should have all the fun, do you? Plus, it gives me a chance to be frightfully knowledgeable about the wine list."

Their table was at the side, and gave a good view across the room, which, like the novel, had an elderly air. Cannerley leaned conspiratorially towards her.

"I don't mind saying that this is a terrifically hush-hush affair. If you decide to join us, you'll be doing a terribly difficult job."

She resolved not to be intimidated by his public school good looks or the stilted dialogue.

"Why's that?"

"Well, the publishers are looking for big sales, which means you'll have to sleep with an RAF pilot and put up with lots of sentences like 'When she heard him gasp, "No", she knew that it was the last thing he meant as the flesh inside her fingers swelled and seized.' Then again, the author's a bit of highbrow, so you're going to have to mug up on Proust and that kind of thing. I won't beat about the bush, we've got to get the *Daily Mail and* the *London Review of Books* on our side."

"I think I can stand it. Anything else I ought to know?"

"'Fraid so, my dear. You're going to have to wear a minutely itemised period wardrobe so that the author can show off his research."

Outside the mist stole down from Piccadilly in one of those haunting descriptive passages so important to break up the dialogue.

"And it will give you the chance to put your French to good use. There's always a need for fluent French speakers in English novels these days, so they can bang on about Paris and so forth and make everybody feel culturally superior." He paused. "Well, will you do it?"

Charlotte's lip quivered, like the loganberry mousse that had just been set before her. "What if it all goes wrong? What if our cover's blown?"

"No chance of that. All the reviewers have been sworn to secrecy."

She nodded. Together they walked out of the restaurant, through the dark, carless streets and into the *Sunday Times* bestseller list.

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ DAVID MELLOR has been given a further three months to finish his long-overdue memoirs for Penguin. If he still fails to deliver, the erstwhile minister for hanky-panky will have to repay his six-figure advance.

Though able to dash off why-oh-why pieces at a moment's notice, Mellor is finding book-length work rather more taxing. One problem is that a modicum of research is necessary — checking dates, places, names etc. Another is that Mellor can't actually operate a word-processor.

He is now urgently seeking a keen young helper. Any volunteers?

■ CLARE ALEXANDER, aka "The Queen", has taken the most fashionable route for former publishers and become an agent, joining the gentlemanly but sinister Gillon Aitken.

Earlier this year she was sacked from Macmillan after losing an internal battle with Ian Chapman, a wily manoeuvrer; before that, she had left Penguin under similarly unhappy circumstances.

Her new employer has many existing clients with these hated conglomerates — for example Pat Barker, who chose not to move with Alexander from Penguin to Macmillan.

Negotiations between the new authors she takes on and her former employers are likely to prove delicate.

■ ASPIRE PUBLISHING, an obscure company in Devon, hopes to cause a sensation with its imminent book *Trial by Conspiracy*, by one Jonathan Bowen Hunt. It is the story of how the *Guardian* and Mohamed Fayed destroyed "an innocent man" (er, Neil Hamilton), leading to "a cover-up of Watergate proportions".

In a publicity flyer Aspire lists some of the "revelations unearthed by Hunt's mole-like burrowing". These include the earth-shaking discovery that Fayed was criticised by DTI inspectors in the 1980s, and that "the Guardian Media Group is one of the most powerful news organisations in Britain. Apart from the *Guardian* and its sister paper the *Observer*, it also publishes the *Manchester Evening News* and a number of other local newspapers... " Shock! Horror!

'Bookworm'

footnotes

THE HUNTING OF THE NARK

THE FAT FRAUDSTER WHO DROVE AWAY WITH £10M was the exciting headline over a scorching exposé in the *Sunday Express* on 9 August. The fat man in the frame was Paul Dawes, a conman who had swindled hundreds of gullible car dealers and buyers. He "sold" them swanky S-registration cars in advance and walked away with their money without producing the cars.

"An international manhunt has been launched", the *Sunday Express* reported, and quoted a Detective Inspector Paul Churchill: "West Midlands police would like to contact Paul Dawes in connection with our investigation into a car purchasing scam which took place last year."

Neither the *Sunday Express* nor any West Midlands police officer let slip the embarrassing fact that the fat fraudster they are chasing is an informer for the West Midlands police.

The article was read with much interest by Jogen Rajcoomar, a prisoner at Blakenhurst jail, who in June was sentenced to seven years for his part in an alleged plot to supply heroin.

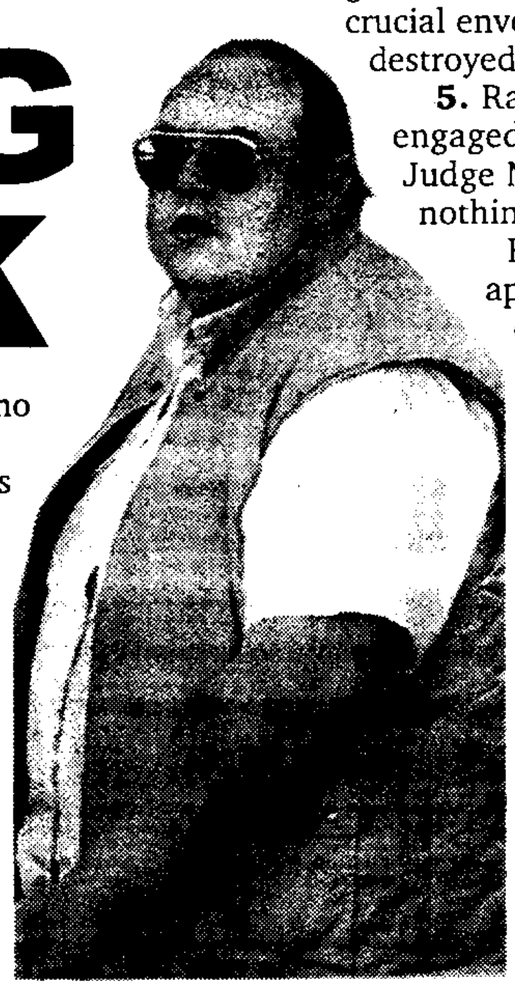
Mauritius-born Rajcoomar was the first black man to become a British prison governor. He was convicted in 1994 of fiddling his expenses at The Mount jail and sent to prison for two years. He complained to the *Eye* a) that he had been wrongfully convicted and b) that expense-fiddling was rife in the prison service and his stiff sentence could only be explained by the colour of his skin.

The *Eye* published nothing at the time, but kept in touch with Rajcoomar, who in May 1995 was transferred to Hewell Grange open prison near Redditch. A few weeks after he arrived he was approached by a new prisoner, the huge and amiable Paul Dawes, who offered him protection against any unpleasantness from unruly prisoners. Dawes warned Rajcoomar of the difficulties he would face when he left prison with no references, a criminal record and a black skin. The fat man hinted that he could be helpful to his new friend after release, and soon afterwards left the prison.

The day after his release on 30 November 1995 Rajcoomar was phoned at his Oxfordshire home by Paul Dawes, who asked for an urgent meeting. Rajcoomar met Dawes at a service station on the M40 near his home on 25 January 1996. At a meeting a few weeks later, Dawes introduced Rajcoomar to "Arif", who said he was a businessman dealing in stolen goods. Arif, who drove a flashy sports car, later introduced Rajcoomar to his "girlfriend", a white woman called "Lesley", and another "businessman" who called himself "Davinder".

In turn, on 1 April 1996 "Davinder" introduced a white man called "Sam", who said he was a road haulier. Thanks to his involvement in drugs dealing, he explained, he was now extremely prosperous. Many meetings and phone calls later, Rajcoomar finally agreed to try to obtain heroin for "Sam". He had no idea where to get it from, and on at least two occasions ducked out of meetings with "Sam" pleading family commitments.

In the late summer of 1996 he was phoned by his old friend Paul Dawes, who suggested he could get heroin from "your friend in Stoke". This was a reference to X, who can't be named for legal reasons. Rajcoomar had met X at a friend's house a few months earlier after turning up unannounced and for no obvious reason at 4am. On 22 August 1996, Rajcoomar went to Stoke and picked up a kilo of heroin from X. The following day, accompanied by a partner of X called Rahman, he took the heroin to an arranged meeting with "Sam" at the Hilton Hotel, Warwick. They handed the heroin over to Sam, and were at once arrested and charged with drug dealing. The handover of the heroin had been tape-recorded and videoed. The two men had been caught red-handed. X, who had also gone to the hotel, was arrested about two hours later.



MASTER SWINDLER: Paul Dawes

The case against Rajcoomar, X and Rahman dragged on for nearly two years after their arrest. In the course of these prolonged proceedings, peppered with demands from the prosecution for "public interest immunity" (gagging orders), the following facts emerged:

1. Paul Dawes was a police informer.

2. "Arif", "Lesley" (who has since died), "Davinder" and "Sam" were all serving West Midlands police officers, their identities protected by gagging orders.

3. Rahman took part in the heroin sale in the belief that X was a police informer, and under the impression, in his own tape-recorded words, that he was doing something "to help the law in one way or another". When Rajcoomar's lawyers asked if X was an informer, the prosecution would neither confirm nor deny it.

4. The meeting in January 1996 at the motorway service station between Rajcoomar and Dawes had been observed by 13 West Midlands plain clothes police officers. None of them had seen any documents passing hands, but Det Sgt Adrian Jenkins said Rajcoomar had handed Dawes an envelope with the prices of drugs scribbled on it. Asked to produce this crucial envelope, Jenkins said he had destroyed it.

5. Rajcoomar had never before been engaged in any form of drug dealing. Judge Nichol accepted that he knew nothing about heroin.

Rajcoomar's lawyers repeatedly applied to rule out the police evidence for "abuse of process", arguing that their client had been "entrapped" in a drugs deal in which every other participant was a police officer or police informer: and that the crime would never have been committed without the police and their informers. When this application was refused, Rajcoomar pleaded guilty to the heroin charge. The three men were convicted and appeared for sentence at Birmingham crown court on 29 June 1998. X, the supplier, who had pleaded not guilty, got seven years. So did Rajcoomar. Rahman got five.

What happened to the man who set the whole deal in motion, the fat fraudster Paul Dawes?

From the moment he started badgering Rajcoomar after the latter's release from prison in November 1995, Dawes was wanted by West Midlands police for selling non-existent cars in advance to his fellow prisoners at Hewell Grange. He was arrested on 16 January 1996, and bailed immediately — in good time to attend the meeting with Rajcoomar at the motorway service station on 25 January; and subsequently to introduce his prey to four undercover police officers, guide him to a drugs supplier and set up the sting at the Hilton Hotel, Warwick. DS Jenkins confirmed in court that Dawes had been kept informed about the Rajcoomar case all through the first eight months of 1996.

On 19 September 1996, four weeks after the Hilton arrests, the West Midlands fraud squad heard that Dawes was responsible for a much bigger car scam, this time worth about £600,000. On the same day, perhaps not surprisingly, DS Jenkins lost touch with his informer. Dawes vanished. In the ensuing months he set about his gigantic £10m car fraud. Despite his huge bulk and reports that he is in hiding in the north-east, Paul Dawes has somehow contrived to remain at large.

Singapore Sting

■ THE habit of paying seafaring staff from offshore subsidiaries in order to avoid national insurance contributions (see Cable and Taxless, *Eye* 955) is sweeping through the shipping industry.

Last month seafarers who work for the ferry company Stena UK were brusquely informed that they would no longer be paid from the company's British headquarters but from a subsidiary in Singapore. Stena workers in cross-Channel ferries affected by the recent merger with P&O will be paid from a P&O subsidiary in Bermuda. (P&O Portsmouth transferred payment of their ferry workers to Bermuda last year.)

A P&O spokesman explained: "In a climate of pressure on the shipping industry generally, shipowners felt themselves to be penalised, and clearly it would have a detrimental effect on employees if shipping companies could no longer survive because of the punitive tax burdens." So "a solution was found" to enable the companies not to pay national insurance contributions, which finance the National Health Service.

The spokesman was quick to point out a) that the "punitive tax burdens" are not lifted from ferry workers, who have to go on paying their national insurance contributions and b) that the "government is fully aware" of the tax dodge and approves it.

Not all P&O and Stena workers are delighted with this arrangement. Lots of them have written to government ministers, including the former seafarers' militant shop steward John Prescott, demanding that the tax loophole be closed at once. They get their replies from social security minister John Denham, another former militant, who writes: "The loss of revenue from the national insurance fund is a matter of concern, but there are no easy solutions."

Diamonds are FO ever

THE "treason trials" of 59 people in Sierra Leone, resulting so far in death sentences for 16 people including five journalists, have embarrassed the foreign office, which worked so hard to restore the regime there.

Minister of state Tony Lloyd has spent anxious hours on the phone trying to persuade prime minister Tajen Kabbah to commute the sentences, without success. Nor has he been able to halt the onward march of Kabbah's ethnic cleansers, the Kamajor militia. All this has cast some doubt on the FO's promotion of the Kabbah regime as a force for democracy and peace.

KABBAH: Darling of the FO

The raids and the treason trials shed new light on the British government's policy since a military coup first overthrew the Kabbah regime in May last year. One reason for that coup was the Kabbah government's interpretation of its promise, in a peace agreement with rebels in November 1996, to expel the mercenary army which had been hired to fight off the rebels. This force, Executive Outcomes, recruited almost entirely from South Africa, had white officers and black troops, and cost impoverished Sierra Leone some $35m, paid mainly in diamonds.

Executive Outcomes was expelled — but quickly replaced by another "security company" called Lifeguard. The commander of Lifeguard was Brigadier Bert Sachse, a former fighter for apartheid in Namibia, whose previous job was commanding officer of, er, Executive Outcomes. Every single employee of Lifeguard previously worked for Executive Outcomes.

Just as the name changed for the security company, so the mining company it protected, Branch Energy, sold out to a sister company called Diamondworks. All this was enthusiastically supported by the foreign office, whose single-minded policy in Sierra Leone was to support the mining companies. The links were close. Simon West, former British military attaché in Sierra Leone, got weekly briefings from Executive Outcomes; and Rupert Bowen, boss of Branch Energy, was, as the Legg report tactfully put it, "formerly of the foreign office".

The "security" of the mining companies and their new protectors was endangered by the May 1997 coup. The restoration of Kabbah by force, mainly thanks to ruthless military intervention from Nigeria, was enthusiastically backed by the foreign office, which, as the Legg report reveals, illegally and in defiance of its own resolutions, colluded with Sandline, yet another security company from the same smelly stable as Executive Outcomes and Lifeguard.

One unsavoury aspect of British government policy was the cutting of humanitarian aid. Almost all the emergency aid agencies who were funded by the department for international development (DFID) were told there was no more government money for their projects. The annual grant of £179,000 to the British agency Merlin for feeding starving children in Kenema was abruptly cut off — though the programme went on, financed from Europe. When the DFID's director of emergency aid, Mukesh Kabila, explained this policy to an angry meeting of aid agencies, he was accused by Médicin Sans Frontières of operating a "starve 'em out" policy to restore Kabbah. The department describes this charge as "absolute nonsense", but admits that humanitarian aid was "scaled down" against the advice and wishes of the agencies.

SURREY? I HAVEN'T A CLUE

■ **THE most fascinating part of the evidence to the Stephen Lawrence inquiry of former Scotland Yard commander Ray Adams concerned his meeting a few weeks earlier with a senior serving officer whose name Adams couldn't remember at a pub he couldn't remember either.**

The meeting was revealed almost accidentally by Mr Adams when he said that a "senior officer" had advised him there was no connection between David Norris, an early suspect for the Lawrence murder, and David Norris, a former police informer who was murdered. Questioned further, Adams said the officer "was a chief superintendent... I can't recall his name". They had met in a pub — "I can't recall the name".

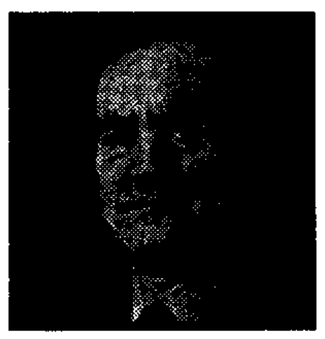
Some time later Jeremy Gompertz QC, for the Metropolitan police, told the inquiry that the meeting took place on 8 June at the Star pub in Leatherhead. It had been arranged through assistant commissioner Johnstone, the officer in charge of the Stephen Lawrence case. The officer Adams met was detective chief superintendent David Wood.

The matter was left there. No one mentioned that DCS Wood was the head of CIB3, the Met's crack anti-corruption unit, which is based outside Scotland Yard not far from Leatherhead.

Two otherwise well-informed anonymous *Eye* correspondents have told us independently of one another that DCS Wood was promptly removed from his CIB3 job after the meeting with Adams. They are wrong. Scotland Yard confirms to the *Eye* that Mr Wood is still head of CIB3. As to why such a very senior officer should have been diverted from his vital job to give routine advice to a former commander about the Stephen Lawrence case, Scotland Yard cannot comment.

High Principals

Solicitor Hoyle



Dr Hall

CLOSE ENCOUNTER

IT IS always easier to threaten writs for libel against your critics if you've got a solicitor on the board.

For four years the authorities at New College, Durham, have been engaged in the usual serial sacking and union-busting. Opposition has been dealt with abruptly. When, for instance, Michael Laidler, head of the psychology department, refused to abandon his "silver book" (trade union) contract, his office was demolished while he was lecturing and his belongings and papers cast into a heap in the passage.

Mr Laidler became very ill and contemplated suicide. He was referred to Action in Mental Health (AIM), a small not-for-profit organisation which represents people in distress, especially at work. Chris Close of AIM took up case at tribunals on several fronts and has already secured several thousand pounds in compensation for injury and back pay.

As part of his work for Mr Laidler and for other clients sacked and harassed at New College, Close wrote a number of searching letters to the college authorities. He even dared suggest that there might be a conflict of interest between the college employing Newcastle solicitors Watson Burton while Andrew Hoyle, the firm's senior partner, is a member of the college corporation (board of governors).

Back came two angry letters from the lawyers. The first insisted there was "no question of any impropriety in this firm representing New College". The second announced: "We write to caution you against writing such correspondence which we have advised our clients contains material which is defamatory and/or constitutes malicious falsehood." The lawyers ordered Mr Close to stop writing to any officer of the college and to disclose the names of anyone to whom he had copied the letters. If he refused, the letter ended, the lawyers reserved the right to sue for an injunction to stop him writing further letters and for libel damages.

Puzzled, Close asked for examples of his allegedly defamatory material. When the lawyers sent back some extracts, he said he was sorry but all of them were quite true and he could not possibly agree not to repeat them. The lawyers appear to have backed off.

FACT TO REMEMBER: In 1994, at the height of the mass sackings of staff, New College received an Investors in People "kite mark" (for excellence). The award came after an inspection from the local TEC.

ANOTHER FACT TO REMEMBER: Dr David Hall, chief executive of the TEC, is a member of the New College corporation.

IMMUNITY CHESTER

THE *Eye* asked the higher education funding council, which regulates university finances on behalf of the taxpayer, about the hundreds of thousands of pounds in public money which have mysteriously gone missing at University College, Chester.

For instance, were the private companies set up by the late bursar in any way relevant? Here is the reply (a leading entry for the *Eye*'s 1998 Straight Answers to Straight Questions Award):

"I can't comment on the situation at an individual institution. If it's in financial difficulty, we will work to resolve that. If we comment on the difficulty, we can only increase the college's problems and it's not in their interests or their students interests to do that."

You can write to Paul Foot at Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

THE SUDDEN death of the rapid-draw Pronto lottery looks set to make a major loser out of that well-connected man of property, Elliott Bernerd. While his company MMK continues to talk of suing BT over the alleged on-line glitches which supposedly caused the close down, a queue is forming of those intent on suing MMK.

Brewer Greene King, whose pubs had a large slice of the limited Pronto action, has already sued. Crown Leisure, which serviced the Pronto outlets, has given notice of legal action. InterLotto, for whom MMK ran Pronto, is consulting m'learned friends. And charities are owed around £20,000 from the Pronto proceeds.

Furthermore the Pronto fiasco and MMK's potential loss of up to £30m are said to have created considerable friction between the unlovable Elliott and his main backer, super-rich Nina Wang. The Hong Kong-based property developer is believed to have joined the naturally offshore Bernerd family interests in backing MMK. The threat to BT and the prospect of a big face-saving settlement may owe much to Bernerd's need to pacify Wang.

MMK pulled the Pronto plug on 21 August blaming BT for problems with its lines to the terminals. BT denies responsibility and blames the MMK equipment. MMK's decision came as a big surprise to InterLotto and others involved in the lottery. There was no prior consultation before the Friday evening switch off. InterLotto received only minutes notice that the game was over.

This has fuelled speculation that MMK's decision owed less to BT and more to the failure of Pronto to deliver the expected goods. It never reached half the target of 2,000 terminals and by shutdown was below 500. Given a pre-launch government death sentence, sales never got off the ground and reached only a tiny fraction of the projected £500m a year. Within weeks of the home office indicating it would not legislate to ban Pronto until next year — leaving MMK to fund losses running at possibly £1m a month — Bernerd decided to head for the exit.

By this time there were already considerable amounts owed by MMK. Greene King — with 200 terminals the major player — has sued for £320,000 which it claims represents an 8 percent commission on Pronto's sales over the first three months. The pub chain says MMK and InterLotto agreed to pay either a percentage or a guaranteed minimum.

Crown Leisure, also the major shareholder in InterLotto, has served notice of a claim for around £200,000 which it says it is owed by MMK for servicing Pronto terminals. Crown Leisure also has a £400,000 loan to InterLotto.

All this could be terminal for InterLotto unless it can somehow revive the lottery by finding fresh finance. The company claims it is owed up to £1.5m by MMK and unless a deal can be done whereby InterLotto can acquire the on-line network a writ seems inevitable. MMK has still to pay an initial £750,000 due when Pronto launched last November. It also owes InterLotto all the subsequent monthly payments under its £1m a year contract for operating the lottery plus 3 percent of sales.

Just how Bernerd intends to deal with the legal fallout remains to be seen. One option would be to wind-up MMK and leave everybody to fight it out with the liquidator. Or he could be generous and cut a new deal with InterLotto which allows the debts to be repaid over time. But so far he has shown little willingness to invest more.

Just what happens with MMK is certain to be influenced by its byzantine corporate structure — a Bernerd trademark. MMK UK, which operated the on-line terminals and network for Pronto, is controlled by MMK Guernsey and MMK Europe, registered in Bermuda. MMK Europe controls MMK Guernsey in which InterLotto is also a shareholder. MMK Europe is InterLotto's effective partner in Pronto. This convoluted structure was designed to avoid unreclaimable multi-million VAT bills on Pronto sales. Something with which the would-be Lord Bernerd's friends in "new" Labour such as arts minister Chris Smith will no doubt be all in favour!

But who owns MMK Europe? The road leads first to the West End offices of Halstead Services which runs the UK operations of Halstead Corporation in Bermuda. This, it is assumed, represents the Bernerd family interests. But beyond the Bermuda triangle? That it seems is where Nina Wang, the second largest shareholder in Bernerd's Chelsfield property group, may well come in. Hong Kong Chinese executives said to be linked to Wang were running MMK in its final months.

If the Wang millions have been funding MMK's losses then Pronto could see the end of another beautiful Bernerd friendship just like that with a previous property partner Lord (Jacob) Rothschild.

INTERNATIONAL conmen have discovered a new fraud flavour of the month with which to entice the unwary — huge caches of Iraqi, and more occasionally Kuwaiti, dinars available at a give-away discount, less than 10 percent of face value. Why so cheap? Because these dinars were issued before the Gulf War and have been replaced in both Iraq and Kuwait. But don't worry. The story is these old dinars, especially from Iraq, can still be traded in the Kurdish areas outside Saddam's control or in Jordan, Baghdad's major trading gateway.

The truth is the dinars are worthless outside and inside Iraq where dollars are the real currency.

In recent years offers of billions of Iraqi dinars coming from warehouse sized stashes in Spain, Greece and Jordan have multiplied. The most recent instance involves the influential Orthodox bishop of Limassol who is at the centre of a "holy fool or holy rogue" debate in Cyprus which has been joined by Scotland Yard.

Bishop Chrysanthos was found to have brought trunk loads of dinars into Cyprus. These were said to be part of a 1.5 billion haul emanating from sources close to King Hussein of Jordan. The bishop wanted to use the dinars to finance a $500m letter of credit.

The dinar scam is just one of several in which

the white-bearded bishop now finds himself entangled thanks to his friendship with an American woman, Marie Eloise Corbin, who in Cyprus used the name Nina Petros. Corbin, 55 and no beauty but clearly a slick grifter, was already wanted in Switzerland when she landed in Cyprus in 1996.

Like those who relieved the Salvation Army of its money, she soon persuaded the bishop she could generate profits to fund good works using the church's reputation and considerable property assets.

This holy alliance of God and Mammon soon turned into an unholy advance fee fraud with gullible investors in Ecuador, Portugal, Poland and Britain sucked in with the phoney promise of up to 1,600 percent returns from trading with the bishop in the equally fictional "Medium Term Note" market. This is the latest wrinkle on the old "stand-by letters of credit"/"prime bank guarantee" con which suckered the Salvation Army out of $7.8m. Investors in Ecuador, including a charity which supports a school for 2,000 impoverished girls, have lost $1.7m. Investors in Portugal $1.5m.

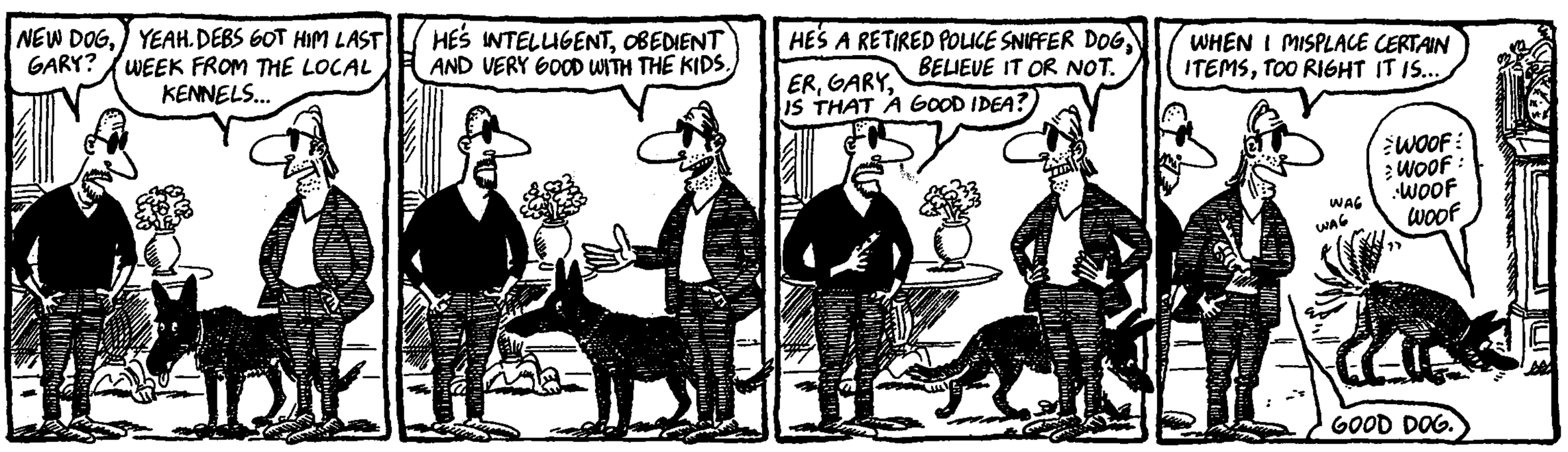
A British investor who almost lost $3.7m — he saw the light and pulled back before his money vanished — complained to Scotland Yard who interviewed the bishop last month. Americans Lawrence Olsen and Shirley Rhodes, together with William Patterson and Jean Khederian, are the focus of the fraud squad inquiries into the attempted fraud. They claimed to have access in Jersey to $200m in gold obtained from Orthodox churches in Serb sections of Bosnia. The bishop liked gold. He returned from a trip to the Philippines with Corbin talking of 25 tons to invest! No doubt from that other source of fool's gold — the hidden Marcos treasure trove.

While Bishop Chrysanthos prays that he will not be charged by the Yard or the Cypriot police — he denies any wrongdoing saying he was duped — Corbin and another religious companion, Texan evangelical preacher Lindell Ballinger, are long gone. Praise the Lord and pass the dinars.

'Slicker'

Celeb

LIGGER


NEW DOG, GARY?
YEAH. DEBS GOT HIM LAST WEEK FROM THE LOCAL KENNELS...
HE'S INTELLIGENT, OBEDIENT AND VERY GOOD WITH THE KIDS.
HE'S A RETIRED POLICE SNIFFER DOG, BELIEVE IT OR NOT.
ER, GARY, IS THAT A GOOD IDEA?
WHEN I MISPLACE CERTAIN ITEMS, TOO RIGHT IT IS...
WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF
WAG WAG
GOOD DOG.

The leading voice in Britain

The Express carried the following leaders in the last three months.

age of consent

time to end inequality and lower the age of consent

Since the consensus is that heterosexual men and women are capable of sufficient maturity at 16 to have sex, then there are no grounds for preventing homosexuals from doing so. Such discrimination has no place as we approach the millennium and today's vote will be a small but important step in modernising Britian.

single parents

lecturing on morals will not cure society's ills

The Goverment-backed Institute for the Family must take care not to become a moralising, patronising institution. While the Government may want to encourage two-parent families, it is not its place to dictate that this is the "best" way to bring up children.

the lords

blair must not bow to peer pressure on vital reforms

If the peers are after a fight, they should be given one. Their case is non-existent and the Government should show up their wrecking efforts.

sink estates

save sink estates from going down the plughole

For too long, politicians have ghettoised the problems of sink estates. The idea that increasing prosperity for all would have a "trickle down" effect on those living in high-rise blocks in deprived areas has been exposed as a myth. A deprived area remains a deprived area – and blights the wider area around it – unless tackled by the Government.

europe

give us more euro again

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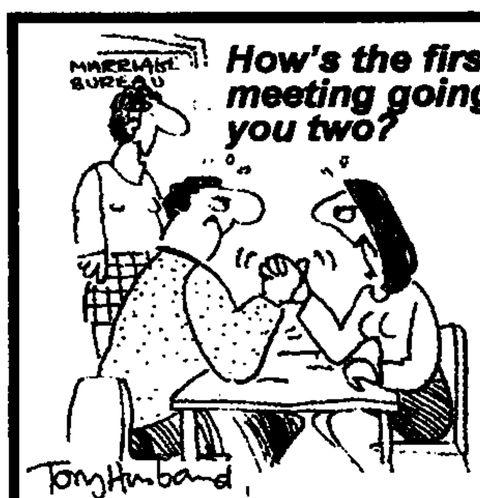

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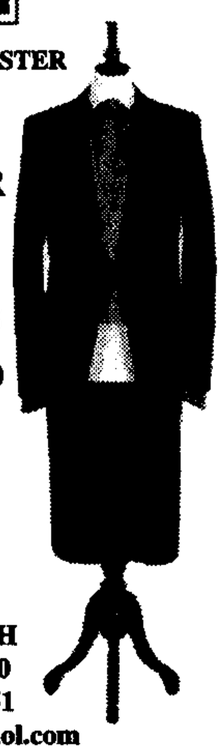

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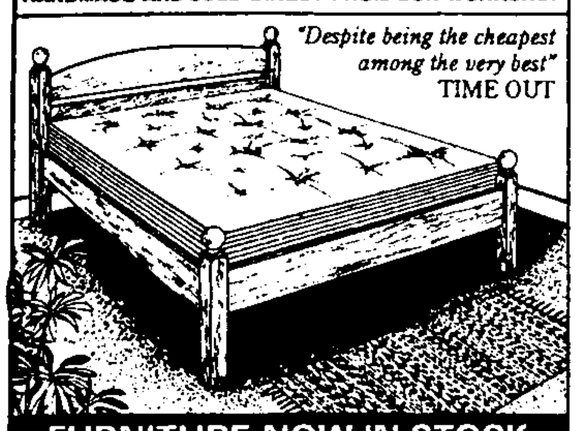

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EYE LOVE

BLOND, ARROGANT MALE of the species (25) would like to dance with one 'more deadlier!' Box 3059.

LONELY, UNEMPLOYED, male graduate, 34, seeks female, 16-50 for fun/ friendship/frolics. (Midlands). Box 2959.

SINGLE MOTHER, 23, redhead, seeks interesting, solvent man. Full letter essential. Kent. Box 3359.`

TALL, SEXY professional man, mid forties, tied – seeks younger, passionate woman for discreet relationship. Box 1859.

STATUESQUE REDHEAD, 35, 5ft 7in, attractive, long hair, pale skin, voluptuous figure, brainy, funny, kind, unavailable, seeks attractive, warm, easy-going, clever, amusing, attached chap for discreet (and discrete) stress-free dalliance. No bigots or gits. Central London. Pic and entertaining letter. So, Tom Paulin, how's about it? Box 1959.

AGEING TOYBOY (40), tall, slim, sexy, romantic – seeks glamorous grandmother. Box 3259.

AMY JOHNSON and AMELIA EHRHART seek vintage aeroplane and strong hand from pilots (35-45) with whom to explore the skies and practise barnstorming. Box 2459.

GUINIVERE, 28, PROFESSIONAL, n.s, attractive, seeks Lancelot with long lance, for jousts – Oxon/Home Counties. No ginger hair. Box 2559.

TECHNICIAN WITH CULTURE (likes to think). 36. Seeks slim, intelligent girl to tap (intellectual?) juices, and let slip the dogs of hedonism! Box 2359.

HANDSOME, INTELLIGENT hunk, 30's, desires glamour puss for arty banter and funky fetish clubbing. London. Box 2159.

EXPROFESSIONAL SPORTSMAN, white, 44, fit, seeks much older female for discreet relationship. London "can travel". Box 2259.

WANTED – FEMALE 49 plus, small, slim bushy haired, with an erotic outlook, adventurous spirit, married, single, any race or religion, a tad on the trashy side – whose spirit has perhaps been suppressed. Unconventional older man, slim, fit, goes anywhere and everywhere with unsatisfied wanderlust. Gambler, risk taker, not rich but generous, humorous – not a suitable friend for slouches. Box 2659.

TWO ASIAN BABES required by two 30 year old white men for dinner dancing and nights indoors at Amityville! Photo essential. Box 2759.

IS THERE SOMEWHERE a wonderful and lovely woman who would appreciate some T.L.C. and understanding? Old village house, beautiful countryside, 1 hour London. Bloke, forties, fairly normal. Box 2859.

TALL, SOLVENT, humorist, 54, London man, has delightful willing partner, seeks lady to share their discoveries, London and West Country. Phone no., photo if possible. Box 3159.

UNCONVENTIONAL WOMAN, 30, seeks honest, intelligent farce in Manchester. Box 3559.

"BILL" (40, NS, tied, professional, energetic, solvent) seeks "MONICA" (any age/nationality, GSOH, similarly tied perhaps) for full "inappropriate" discreet day/eve relationship – office desks optional. Any dry cleaning bills paid. Box 3659.

HANDSOME GRADUATE, male, 25, seeks female 20-30 for amusing evenings out. London. Box 3759.

TALL, SLIM BLOKE, 35, educated, working class, loves life, wine, the Dolomites, glamour – aspires to soul mate status with gorgeous girl 20-30's into same and shopping at Koh Samui, Agent Provocateur. Chatterboxes with imagination welcome, but no snobs. London. Box 3859.

UNCLUTTERED SINGLE MAN, 45, slim, 6ft 3ins, intelligent, humorous and solvent – seeks attractive, bright, educated, 30-something lady for fun and hopefully commitment. London based. Box 3959.

CAMBRIDGE: visiting academic seeks sexy lady, any age, for friendship and fun during sabbatical 98/99 (and afterwards, who knows?) I'm 60 (but not past it), professor (but not boring), continental university (but British), separated (but no hang-ups) – Box 3459.

HANDSOME, TALL, professional male, 40, with GSOH, seeks attractive, gregarious female for passionate affair. Discretion assured. N.Ireland. Box 4059.

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NOT SLIM, DARK, handsome, young (50+) or very successful but humorous divorced man wltm bright, sexy, slim lady Oxon/Warwick/Northants. Box 4159.

TALL, AMUSING, assertive, sensuous, generous and successful Bristol and London man, 40, seeks a naughty younger woman for some discreet fun and games. I love travel, cinema, theatre, restaurants and dinner parties, music, keeping fit, nights on the town and weekends in the country. If you would like a fun relationship with some spice please write to me with your telephone number to Box 3056.

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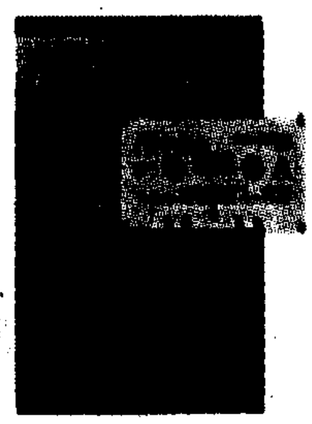
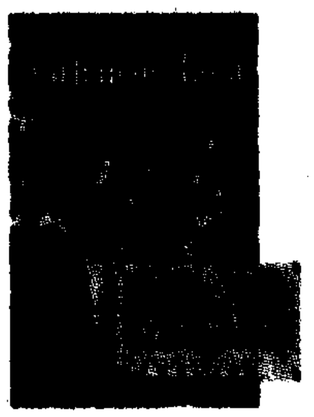
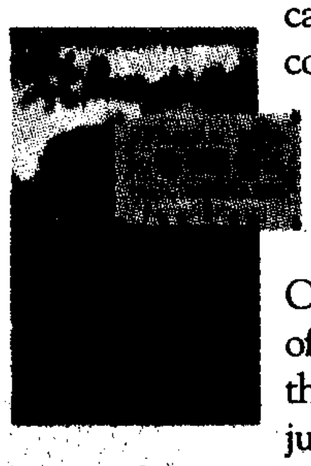


Champs-Elysées in French: The rich traditions and contemporary *élan* of France resonate through each edition of *Champs-Elysées*. Reports on urban violence and unemployment in France, a promenade through the Hautes Vosges, and a comprehensive look at soccer mania in France are among the recent features on this lively French-language audiomagazine. Coming up: a visit to Brive-la-Gaillarde in the Dordogne.



Schau ins Land in German: Professional journalists in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland provide a fascinating overview of German-speaking Europe every month in *Schau ins Land*. Recent programmes have included a two-part profile of Bertolt Brecht, a feature on women in the Bundeswehr, a visit to Dresden's Frauenkirche, a look at Swiss efforts to rebuild the Titanic, and a report on the 50th anniversary of the world-renowned Max Planck Institute.



Puerta del Sol in Spanish: A talented group of broadcast journalists in Madrid examines the colourful textures of Hispanic culture every two months in *Puerta del Sol*. Interviews with best-selling novelist Arturo Perez-Reverte and philologist Fernando Lázaro-Carreter, a visit to the walled gardens of Córdoba, a report on the restoration of one of El Greco's masterpieces, and a profile of the new Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao are just a sample of segments included in recent editions of this compelling Spanish-language audiomagazine.

Acquerello italiano in Italian: Produced six times a year in Rome, *Acquerello italiano* showcases the vitality and style of contemporary Italy. Recent programmes have included a look at the fashion industry in Milan, interviews with Oscar-winning director Giuseppe Tornatore and World Trade Organization head Renato Ruggiero, and features on the Shroud of Turin, the controversial cancer treatment of Luigi Di Bella, Rome's Borghese Gallery, and the ever-popular Harry's Bar in Venice.

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